

Issue 13: Summer 2009

# 4STRUGGLEMAG

from the hearts and minds of north american political prisoners and friends



## Support 4strugglemag

Each issue, we send more than 200 copies to prisoners across North America, at no cost to them. Your support is needed to continue this project. Please help subsidize these costs by subscribing to the magazine and/or offering a one-time donation. Please check out the 'subscribe and donate' link on our website: [www.4strugglemag.org](http://www.4strugglemag.org)

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# Welcome to 4struglemag

You have just come to a dynamic and unique publication, where Truth (real and raw) speaks to power. This magazine focuses the insights and experiences of U.S. political prisoners on major issues of the day. While a lot of the writing is by political prisoners, other activists, allies, revolutionaries and insightful outside voices are included. We publish 3 issues a year and all back issues remain posted on the website (4struglemag.org).

4struglemag is an independent non-sectarian revolutionary voice. We are unapologetically anti-imperialist and solidly in support of progressive National Liberation, especially the struggles of New African/Black, Mexican/Chicano, Puerto Rican and Native American Nations presently controlled by U.S. imperialism. Reflecting the work and principles of political prisoners held by the United States, 4struglemag advocates for Justice, Equality, Freedom, Socialism, Protection of our Mother Earth, Human Rights and Peace.

www.4struglemag.org is primarily an e-magazine, but hard copies are available (free to prisoners, \$6 an issue for people outside -- yearly \$15 subscriptions are available). We encourage readers to respond, critique and carry on discussions in the magazine. We value and encourage feedback and discussion. The address of each political prisoner is posted with their article so people can directly communicate with them (few political prisoners have access to the internet. Some federal prisons now have an email system for prisoners. But you have to be on a pre-approved email contact list before you can send or receive email from the prisoner. Therefore, you must first write to the prisoner and get all the information on how to get on his/her approved email list). We like dialog, but we are not going to print racist or pro-imperialist messages, so you government agents and klansmen don't bother wasting your time.

Each issue of 4struglemag focuses on at least 3 main topics. Additional unrelated poems, graphics, essays, announcements and more are included. Unsolicited writings and graphics are accepted and welcomed. We won't guarantee printing, but we'd like to see your work. This and other correspondence should be sent via regular mail to the following address: (remember it costs 75 cents to send a letter to Canada from the U.S.).

4struglemag  
P.O. Box 97048  
RPO Roncesvalles Ave.  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6R 3B3 Canada

or via email to:  
jaanlaaman@gmail.com  
Jaan Laaman, editor  
anti-imperialist political prisoner

## Call for contributors

4struglemag is looking for quality writing that contributes to critical, revolutionary thought and reflection. In particular, we are interested in the following:

**Feature articles:** We're looking for in depth, analytical articles that critically examine a particular issue, historical occurrence, political idea, or current event. We are looking for well-researched articles that broaden and challenge revolutionary thought. If you are in need of research help, don't hesitate to ask. We may be able to supply some of the resources needed in order to write a well-informed piece. We can also help with the editing and/or writing process. Let us know if you have any ideas.

**Book reviews:** Is there a book you'd like to review for 4struglemag? Let us know. If you don't have the book, we can arrange to get it to you.

**Letters:** We love to hear from you. Please let us know if we have permission to print your letter in the next issue.

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M6R 3B3 Canada

7. "Dr. Raif A Dhaif at Terre Haute prison's new communication management unit" by Katherine Hughes. Washington Report on Middle Eastern Affairs, 6/18/07.
8. "Facility holding terrorism inmates limits communication" by Dan Eggen, Washington Post, 2/25/07.
9. "Documents show secretive US prison program isolating Muslim, Middle Eastern prisoners" by Jennifer Van Bergen, the raw story (online blog), 2/16/07.
10. "America's Guantanamo Bay" by Royal Jones, Sr. (available on supportdaniel.org/cmu)

**Weblinks - Prisoners at the CMU**  
www.supportdaniel.org, www.supportdaniel.org/cmu  
www.yashinart.com  
www.aliasad.org  
www.freehalidawan.com  
hamidhayat.blogspot.com  
www.dhaiftrial.net

**Supportive Organizations**  
Civil Liberties Defense Center - www.cldc.org  
Center for Constitutional Rights - www.ccrjustice.org  
National Lawyers Guild - www.nlg.org  
Nuclear Resister - www.serve.com/nukeresister/

**Demand Change!** \*You can contact your elected officials and demand they shut the CMU down\*

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Attorney General Eric Holder  
US Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Also, www.senate.gov and www.house.gov (type in your address to get your rep's contact)

### Ask other Organizations for their support!

\*You can contact human rights groups and urge them to address the CMU and join legal efforts to close it. Please be polite.\*

1. ACLU National Prisoner Project - 202-393-4930 www.aclu.org/prisoners
2. Human Rights Watch - www.hrw.org
3. Amnesty International - www.amnestyusa.org
4. Stop MAX coalition - www.afsc.org/stopmax

The following organizations signed a letter opposing the "limited communication for terrorist inmates" policy the BoP tried to pass a few years back. Contact them and let them know that plan was indeed put forth in the form of the CMU and urge them to address it.

1. Center for National Security Studies - www.cnss.org
2. Comité Pro Derechos Humanos de Puerto Rico - presposp-iliticospuertorricenos.org
3. DC Prisoners' Legal Services Project - www.washlaw.org/projects/deprisoners\_rights/default.htm
4. FLA Institutional Legal Services - (352) 375-2494
5. Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project - (847) 328 1543
6. Legal Aid Society - www.legal-aid.org
7. Office of Public Defender-Maryland - www.opd.state.md.us
8. The Multiracial Activist - www.multiracial.com
9. National Boricua HR Network - boricuahumanrights.org
10. NW Constitutional Rights - (503) 295-6400
11. Penal Reform International - www.penalreform.org
12. People's Law Office - www.peopleslawoffice.com
13. Prison Legal News - www.prisonlegalnews.org
14. Sylvia Rivera Law Project - www.srlp.org
15. Prisoners' Legal Services of New York - www.plsny.org
16. Uplown People's Law Center - (773) 769-1411

\*You can contact the media and request they investigate and expose the CMUs. Letters to the Editors and op-eds are good ways of doing this. \* Some outlets:

### Mainstream Media

The New York Times - www.nytimes.com  
LA Times - www.latimes.com  
The Washington Post - www.washingtonpost.com  
Seattle Times - seattletimes.nwsource.com  
San Francisco Chronicle - www.sfgate.com  
The Oregonian - www.oregonlive.com/oregonian  
Indianapolis Star - www.indystar.com  
The New Yorker - www.newyorker.com  
Newsweek - www.newsweek.com  
CNN - www.cnn.com  
BBC - www.bbc.co.uk  
MSNBC - www.msnbc.msn.com  
Chicago Tribune - www.chicagotribune.com  
USA Today - www.usatoday.com  
Houston Chronicle - www.houstonchron.com  
Boston Globe - www.boston.com/bostonglobe/  
Village Voice - www.villagevoice.com  
Hartford Courant - www.courant.com

### Independent/Alternative Media

Pacific Radio - www.pacificradio.org  
National Public Radio - www.npr.org  
Counterpunch - www.counterpunch.org  
Prison Legal News - www.prisonlegalnews.org  
Mother Jones - www.motherjones.com  
Ume Reader - www.ume.com  
Z Magazine - www.zmag.org/zmag

Upping the Anti - uppingtheanti.org  
The Independent - www.independent.org  
Your local pirate radio station - (US list) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pirate\_radio\_in\_North\_America/Partial\_List\_of\_pirate\_radio\_stations\_in\_the\_United\_States



35. Although it is called 'USP Marion', the USP closed in 2005 and the prison consists of a camp and a medium (the CMU being inside the medium).
36. Lappin testimony to Congressional Subcommittee.
37. Letter to Dean Kuipers, October 2008. Signed by Warden Hollingsworth.
38. This occurred despite President Obama's decision to release documents through FOIA at a higher pace than his predecessors.
39. 'Reexamine Prison Unit for Muslims' by Carl Strock, Daily Gazette. 3/15/09.
40. The two I refer to are not out of the 'average' in size either one 5 ft 11, the other 5 ft 6 and both slim.
41. 28 CFR 540.18 Special Mail
42. Program Statement #1480.05/9/21.2000, News Media Contacts.
43. from 'Notice to Inmate of Transfer to CMU'
44. personal observation
45. Josh Raisler Cohn unpublished article. Cited from "How many Terrorists are There. The Escalation in So-Called Terrorism Prosecution." 16 Fed.Sent.R.38., pp.7 WL23269270 October 1, 2003.
46. from 'Notice to Inmate of Transfer to CMU'
47. "US 'is not and will never be at war with Islam,' Obama says" by Richard Wolf, USA Today, 4/7/09.

Appendix A: Marion CMU Demographic

Number of prisoners = 25  
Organized by race/national origin  
Middle Eastern-10  
African-American-7  
White-5  
Latino-2  
Native American-1  
Asian American-0

Appendix B: Mail Violation Examples

In October 2008, I received a mail violation for the Jericho Movement's Freedom Times - a newspaper by and about the political prisoner support organization. At various levels, I was informed it was rejected either due to its 'divisive' nature or because it contained articles about other inmates. The BoP's faulty logic was that reading these articles would contribute to the "detriment of security, safety & good order of the institution." (original mail violation, October 2008.)

The divisiveness argument is an interesting one given that I receive (and the unit receives) what may easily be defined as 'divisive' articles in the op-ed/editorial pages of the NY Times, USA Today and Chicago Tribune. There are point-counter-point lambasting of Congress and the President and extreme conservative/religious perspectives represented in these screeds (e.g. against abortion, casting queer people as sinners etc). But for some reason, the BoP allows these publications in and deems them relevant to a safe and acceptable dialogue.

My assumption about the articles in the Freedom Times (I still haven't yet seen it) is that Jericho is critical of the BoP and the prison industrial complex that exists in this country (Currently housing 2.3 million people in prisons/jails and 5 million on probation/parole, leading to the sick statistic that 1 in 31 US adults are under criminal supervision. See the Pew Center's website & reports for more info: [http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/initiatives\\_detail.aspx?initiativeID=31336](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/initiatives_detail.aspx?initiativeID=31336)). Also, the Jericho Movement argues forcefully yet legally that there are political prisoners in US prisons and demands their amnesty (I was granted PP status by Jericho in 2007). In denying me this newspaper, they are actually cutting me off from a base of support. In the past 8 months, I have received other articles and newspapers that contain articles by/about other prisoners but they take place in the context of safe/acceptable mainstream publications, not newspapers that criticize the BoP, prisons and that argue for the release of political prisoners.

Another example. On 4/15/09, I received a mail violation for the publication Rolling Thunder by the Crimethinc Ex-Worker's Collective. It was denied based on "violence" depicted on roughly 11 pages. It's ironic that I can receive any number of corporate newspapers detailing the riots at the April 2009 NATO protests in Strasbourg, France, the G20 protest in London and police overreactions and violence at last summer's DNC and RNC mobilizations. The reason is the mainstream publications are "objective," while Crimethinc's publication "encourages or promotes violence". Crimethinc is being held to an extreme level of scrutiny based on their obvious radical beliefs and unflinching support of myself and other ecological and animal rights prisoners.

The overall effect of these mail violations is a furthering of the alienation processes that the CMU engenders. On some level, I am quite clueless about what is happening in our movement(s) and on the streets, and have to rely way too much on mainstream and shallow sources of news (a point made by Rob Thaxton, ironically, in a past copy of Rolling Thunder).

RESOURCES \*YOU can educate yourself on the CMU!\*

Articles / Media

1. "Little Guantanamo - Secret 'CMU' prisons designed to restrict communication of jailed Muslims and activists with outside world." Democracy Now, 4/17/09.
2. "Secretive US Prison Units to house Muslim, Animal Rights & Environmental Activists" by Will Potter. [greenisthenewred.com](http://greenisthenewred.com), 4/14/09.
3. "Daniel McGowan - Another victim in 'War on Terror'" by Stephen Lendman. [sjlendman.blogspot.com](http://sjlendman.blogspot.com), April 2009.
4. "Guantanamo at Home - terrorist suspects are held in US prisons on dubious evidence under inhumane conditions" by Jeanne Theoharis. The Nation, 4/20/09.
5. "The View from Here" column by Carl Strock. Schenectady Daily Gazette. [www.dailygazette.com](http://www.dailygazette.com)
6. "Terrorist Prison - Eco-activist sent to secretive new prison" by Camilla Mortenson, Eugene Weekly, 12/04/08.

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And thanks, again, to Kevin 'Rashid' Johnson, for being our resident artist.



# Issue # 13 - Introduction

Welcome everyone, to issue 13 of 4strugglemag. This is our 5th year of publishing this voice of u.s. political prisoners. We are getting more feedback, information and insight from readers -- keep it up and join in the ongoing discussions.

I'm pleased to be back, actively involved in this issue, after my drawn out transfer last winter from the Mass state prison system to the federal BOP system. While I was in transit, the outside comrades did a good job putting out issue 12.

This issue, 13, has a lot of really important information and good words for you. We begin with a section on prison repression and revolutionary prisoners. Dan McGowan's article on CMUs is must reading about a new type of control unit. Also in that section, check out Bellicose Kenet's piece on why revolutionary minded prisoners too often give up the struggle when they get released. We are initiating an ongoing discussion on this question and my response is the opening of this dialog.

Since this issue is coming out in mid-summer '09, the second section is on Black August, its meaning and significance. Section three is great reading. We are printing legendary Black revolutionary and long time political prisoner Sundiata Acoli's entire updated short book - "History of the New African Prison Struggle". Read, learn, and save this section.

Throughout this issue, you'll find grey boxes with useful information and updates. We are also, sadly, informing our readers of the passing of a good comrade, Dr. Alan Berkman, who was a political prisoner in the 1980s and 90s.

In order to keep the mailing costs of hard copies of 4SM somewhat in check, we are limiting the issue to 52 pages. Contributions to help mail and production costs are always welcome folks. We already have some great articles for issue 14 (out this Fall, in Nov.), including responses to the Dialectical and Historical Materialism piece from issue 11, and a statement from Jericho Movement founder Jaili Muntagim, on the u.s. political prisoners support movement. Send in your thoughts on any of our articles or discussions and you might see your words printed in #14 also. See you in November.

Freedom Is A Constant Struggle!

Jaan Laaman, editor

## An Update from Jaan Laaman

As I stated in the issue intro, I am now back in the federal BOP system, after finishing a Mass state sentence. Last winter I began an on and after 53 year federal sentence and I am now in a u.s. penitentiary in the middle of the Sonoran desert in Arizona, far from any place, kind of like being in a hot Siberia. There have been many changes in the BOP in the 9 years I have been out of this system, and mostly all for the bad I'd say, including in this pen, which is pretty strange. The struggle goes on though, no matter what prison we are in.

Recently I began doing radio commentaries again, from here in Tucson. Some internet and air wave stations carry them, and they are also available at a blog site: [www.free-jaan.com](http://www.free-jaan.com). Any stations or sites interested in using them regularly can have each new commentary (one or two a month) emailed to them as soon as they are produced. Just contact me or the blog site.

Unlike Walpole, the Mass state prison I was in last year, here in the feds I can't receive any mail from other prisons, so prisoners should direct all their letters to the 4SM P.O. box, not to me. Many fed prisons, this penitentiary included, now allow prisoners to have email. It is great to have a little 21st century communication, but it is a restricted system. You have to be pre-approved before you can send or receive an email from a prisoner. This means you have to send a letter to the prisoner and get all the information about how to get on his/her approved email contact list.

The email address for 4SM in my name is still operational, but I do not directly get these messages, it is not my prison email address. If you want direct email contact with me, write to me.

VENCEREMOS!

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u.s. penitentiary  
P.O. Box 24550  
Tucson, AZ 85734



## "Little Guantanamo": Exposing the CMU cont...

I read two passages below while writing this article. They fit well here:

"After climbing a great hill, one only finds more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest . . . But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended." — Nelson Mandela

First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me. —Pastor Martin Niemöller

**Acknowledgements** \*I read once, perhaps in 9th grade English, that "no man [sic] is an island". If anything I have learned that over the last four years! Eternal gratitude and love to my wife, partner and best friend Jenny, for everything. My family, friends and community have been there for me unflinchingly — especially the NYC crew. Special thanks to Josh Raisler Cohn, Matt Strugar and Lauren Reagan for their endless legal advocacy, analysis of the CMU and friendship. Of course, thank you to all the CMU prisoners for feedback and the laughs.

### Endnotes

1. As an introduction, for those unfamiliar with my case, I am serving an 84-month sentence in federal prison for arson & conspiracy for my role in 2 arsons claimed by the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) in 2001. I left the group in 2001, was indicted 12/7/05, pleaded to a non-cooperative plea agreement in 2006 & reported to prison in 7/07. I received a 'federal crime of terrorism' enhancement, 3 years of probation and 1.9 million USD in restitution. I am set for release on 6/2013.
2. On the way to the CMU, I received a grand jury subpoena from Wisconsin. I refused to answer questions at the grand jury, was held in civil contempt for 8 days and, before my appeal made it to court, was released due to an indictment having been issued. That case has since been resolved with 3 plea agreements. More info can be found at <http://www.cldc.org>.
3. Memorandum in Opposition to the Application of Terrorism Enhancement. US vs. McGowan, CR 06-60124-AA. Filed May 4, 2007.
4. "Facility holding terrorism inmates limits communication" Dan Eggen, Washington Post, 2/25/07.
5. We are 'prisoners.' 'Inmate' is the authorities' word for us. Eggen article.
6. Much of the early information on the CMUs was due to the writings of Dr. Rafiq Dhaif and the two articles cited in the 'Resources' section by Eggen/Van Bergen.
7. Testimony of Harley G. Lappin before House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce Justice, Science and Related Agencies. 110th Congress, July 2008.
8. Based on observations of men who were at FCI Terre Haute.
9. Institutional Supplement # MAR-5321.07A, November 13, 2008. CMU.
10. Unpublished paper written by Josh Raisler Cohn. 2008.
11. Lappin testimony before Congressional Subcommittee. These movements include environmental, animal rights, tax resisters, white separatists, Muslim charities etc.
12. In my case, I ask 'deter from what?' At the time of my arrest, I was in acupuncture school, long divorced from ELF and focused on prisoner support, environmental justice and combating domestic violence.
13. Unpublished paper by Josh Raisler Cohn, pp8.
14. Dr. Richard Korn, 'Report on the Effects of Confinement in the Lexington High Security Unit.' August 25, 1987, pp19-20.
15. Unpublished paper by Josh Raisler Cohn.
16. See <http://www.shac7.com> for background on that case
17. December 18, 2008 & March 10, 2009 letters from attorneys Matthew Strugar and Lauren Reagan to FOIA/Privacy Act Section of BOP Office of General Counsel.
18. Blacks' Law Dictionary, Third pocket edition. Bryan A. Garner (ed) 2006, p228.
19. BOP Transfer Order for D McGowan, April 2008.
20. Notice to Inmate of Transfer to Communication Management Unit' dated 9/3/08 signed by Lisa J. W. Hollingsworth and J.S. Wilson.
21. The '18 months of clear conduct' is standard at all federal prisons yet no one here expects to receive a transfer on that date for reasons I will explore.
22. Code of Federal Regulation, 2 CFR 541 and Subpart D-Control Units
23. Admissions & Orientation Handbook, USP Marion CMU, Revised June 2008.
24. BOP Docket No. 1135-P RIN 1120-AB35, 71 Fed. Reg. 16520-16525 (April 3, 2006)
25. ibid.
26. Coalition Letter to Bureau of Prisons re: Suppression of Prisoner Contacts, June 2006.
27. Van Bergen article.
28. Title 5 USC 551.
29. Jayyousi v. Muskasey, Lappin, Case 08-21310-civ-Cooke, Southern District of Florida-Miami.
30. Institutional Supplement USP Marion CMU.



**Dictatorship:** Autocratic (unlimited authority with unlimited rule) over the people by a dictator/single person or small clique of persons via despotic (absolute and unlimited) and often tyrannical (oppressive and brutal) power expressed by unquestionable orders imposed authoritatively.

**Exploitation:** To use mealy or unjustly for one's own advantage; unfairly or cynically using another person or group for profit or advantage.

**Fascism:** More appropriately called "corporatism" because it is a merger of state and corporate power. This is the extreme response of capitalism to economic crises. It is a repressive form of government that has three (3) different faces: one, out of power; two, in power but not secure; and, three, in power and securely so. This type of government takes on police state characteristics wherein the political regime forcibly suppresses all opposition and enforces the severe economic and social regimentation of the masses in order to maintain the status quo of oligarchic plutocracy. Tell-tale characteristics of such a setup include centralization of monopoly finance capital under the guise of privatization, where even your so-called "public" utilities and other institutions (water, oil, electric companies, jails and prisons, roads and highways, welfare offices, and media/arwaves etc.) are brought under the cartel control of large corporations belonging to the ruling class; government intervention and controls that keep the business carts from failing financially (e.g. bailouts of airlines, banking, insurance and automobile industries with tax dollars; and government subsidies directed to chosen businesses, etc.; interlocks wherein the corporate

masters either instruct government officials on what course of action to take, or they hold actual government posts; totalitarian regimentation which includes government ID, censorship, gun control, unjust searches and seizures, omnipresent surveillance (cameras everywhere and big brother is watching), deployment of a massive snitch network, no-knock warrants, and private military forces like Blackwater Corp., and the forcible injection of people with anti-psychotic drugs, etc; and, the scapegoating of powerless groups based upon their race or sexual orientation. There is no such thing as a 'free market.' It is a social deception. The hand is very visible. The fascist arrangement tolerates the existence of no valid revolutionary activity, and its deceptive nature can be seen in the fact that if one were forced to define it in one simple word, that word would be 'reform: economic reform.

**Politics of two arms:** the connection between military buildup and imperialist economic domination of Third World communities, joining an economics of appropriation of land, resources, labor and institutions with military bases for the control and monitoring of insurgencies and defending of imperialist economic interests.

**Oligarchy:** Government by the few over the many, where a small group exercises control for corrupt and selfish purposes.

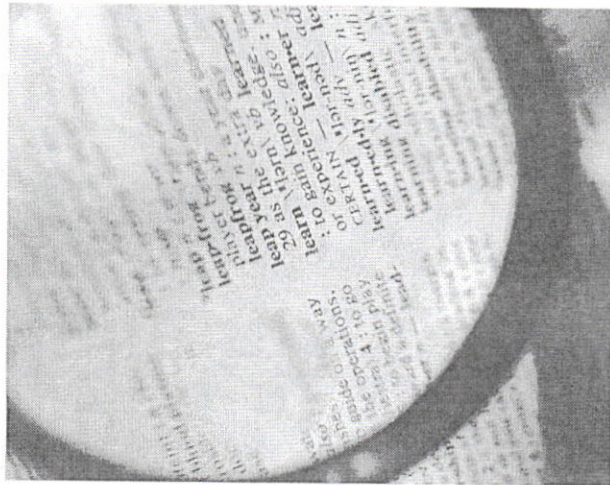
**Plutocracy:** Government by a controlling class of the wealthy.

**Protest:** When I say that this or that doesn't suit me and brings me harm which I intend to stop by any means necessary.

**Resistance/rebellion/revolt:** When I ensure that what doesn't suit me no longer occurs.

**Vertical integration:** A form of business organization in which a single company/firm owns and controls the entire process of production from the procurement and unearthing of the raw materials to the manufacture and sale of the finished product; integrating and controlling economic activity from basic production to the point-of-sale.

**Welfare:** Though many are brainwashed (see that definition above) into thinking that this is a bad thing and something to be ashamed of needing, it is simply aid for those in need; the state of doing well in respect to happiness and well-being, and the improvement of this state for disadvantaged social groups. It is a necessity created by the unjust and unfair economic system of capitalism. It is a civil and human right, although it is severely underfunded by the government politicians who practice to deceive.



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## Letters

Dear 4strugglemag, Revolutionary Greetings:

I am a Texas prisoner doing a 20 year and 12 year bid and I write you this letter to thank you for your mags you send me. As a result it has opened my mind and eyes to what is really going on and what actions need to be taken to cease the corruption and oppressive/repressive acts and omissions of our state and government officials and leaders. I also know that knowledge is power so we must diligently, without ceasing, educate to liberate the lost and blind people, in truth, love and justice. Now I am only 30 years old and have only been locked up about 6 years but I have revolutionized my mind and heart now that I have seen the light more clearly. So now I advocate for Truth, Justice, Equality, Freedom, Socialism, Protection of Our mother Earth, Human Rights and Peace against U.S. imperialism. Also as a born again Christian, I know it's my duty to stand up and speak out against wickedness and evil like Jesus did, as well as taught, and told his disciples and Church to do.

Now I am not a scholar but I do have vision and knowledge that I strive to make better via reading, listening and researching so I ask for tips/advice for books to read and things to do to enhance my vision and knowledge as a revolutionary minded souljah so that I can be an vessel, leader, teacher and asset to my community and the struggle of the People.

I leave you as I came and pray my letter gives inspiration, wisdom, knowledge, understanding and the courage and passion to fight the good fight, to dare to struggle - dare to win. Shalom.

No Justice, no peace!  
Strength and Solidarity  
Oliver E. Lister II  
1279183  
CY Unit 899 FM 632  
Kennedy TX  
USA 78119

Greetings brothers and sisters!

I am writing this letter to encourage everyone there and abroad to keep on keeping on! I recently was fortunate enough to get a glance at the #12 issue and hope I can obtain more issues, with your continued ability to print and offer us who are not fortunate with finances at the moment.

I have been incarcerated in Texas since July 91 and am serving a 25 year sentence. Throughout my time here I have been exposed to various ideologies, beliefs and or-

ganizations.

I am looking forward to being released soon, though in Texas you never know what to expect. I hope that you can give me more information about ways I can help to enhance 4strugglemag. Please keep feeding the flocks of Black men/minorities with snippets of history, news of today and direction for the future. I am loving the movement, and refuse to allow stagnation and regression keep my peers lost in this horrible nightmare.

Unjust imprisonment  
without true warriors  
fighting for true freedom

Thanks for all you are doing; keep up the good work.

Sincerely, a brother  
(Keith H. Daniels)

*From political prisoners in Colombia, passed along from Project Accompaniment and Solidarity with Colombia (www.pasc.ca)*

San Juan de Girón (Colombia)

Colombia, a country increasingly to the right, has generated in a nightmare a dangerous monster with clear 'neo-fascist' tendencies whose morbid plan is sponsored by the narco-paramilitary Alvaro Uribe Vélez and his cabinet of criminals in government. Meanwhile, the entire design of this fascist phenomenon has been mentored and financed by the imperial north. Since Colombia is one of the only Latin-American countries that doesn't joke around about fulfilling its duties as a North-American colony, it could provide a springboard from which future invasions of the southern continent were made possible but for the wave of emancipation being led by various nations like Venezuela, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Argentina, etc.... Those countries have broken away from U.S. hegemony and are building their futures in an autonomous and sovereign manner devoid of the recipes and interferences of the neo-liberal world.

But Colombia, sadly, remains trapped in the clutches of a fistful of criminals anchored in power. These, through the most harmful and fraudulent means of corruption, mafia and violence of all kinds, try to silence the voice of opposition that echoes mostly throughout social and popular sectors. With gunpoint and prison, they attempt to bar us from the political stage of our country.

There remains no doubt that the assault of uribism is conducted in large part through the medias and that it is gaining ground in various sectors where the population is subjected to manipulative tactics in civic-military programs like: 'families in action', 'network of cooperators',



marches, concerts, false nationalism, etc...

Meanwhile the regime's attack is brutally felt in prisons where the INPEC (National Penitentiary and Prison Institute) is starting to play a cardinal role in 'democratic security', actively participating in anti-insurgency programs and other means of social control. Some of these programs are camouflaged in legal disguises like with the hackneyed 'justice and peace law' (JLP) that claims it applies through persuasion and force to the political parties of Colombia. Through all the aforementioned tenets of its petty plan the Uribe regime aspires to dismantle the solidarity and social organization of us political detainees and prisoners of war because we have become, from our places of confinement, a tribunal of denunciations and opinions at the national and international levels that undermine the news fabricated in the media which denies the existence of an internal conflict in Colombia. The retrograde oligarchy of our country has tried to occult this conflict throughout the ages.

On account of the servile elites that are guided by ultrabism, Colombia has become a forsaken island and other countries that are building, by means of solidarity and autonomous efforts free from foreign influence, the great motherland of Latin America with integrative programs like: ELALBA(Bolivian Alternative for Latin America and the Caribbean), Telesur (The New Television Station of the South), UNASUR(program for the integration and military defense of Latin America led by Brazil and not liable to interference by the Pentagon), plans for the search and exploitation of hydrocarbon coordinated by various oil companies (PDVSA, PETROBRAS amongst others). These independent developments of South American nations contrast with the total dependence of Colombia on the United States.

We propose from jail to continue unveiling this fascist regime through denunciation and the providing of alternative information that shows people of the world that Colombian reality does not fall short from catastrophic.

We shall continue to promote that a national constituent assembly, which includes the participation of all popular and social sectors, replace narco-ultrabism with a nationalist and pluralist government that governs for the masses and ties itself to the Latin American Bloc being edited by our neighbors.

We propose that this government spring forth from the majorities and liberties amnestied to the more than 7200 political detainees and prisoners of war confined in Colombia.

## Canada Using Bad Faith Negotiations and Jail Against Ongwehonwe'

April 22, 2009 (Ohsweken, Haudenosaunee Six Nations Territory): We Ongwehonwe' have been charged by Canada for allegedly committing criminal acts while peacefully defending our land. We make this statement to strongly denounce Canada for its present day approach to Ongwehonwe' nations. The Governments of Canada and Ontario are engaging us in bad faith negotiations that produce no meaningful results and pressing criminal charges against those who take peaceful action to protect our rights and our land.

We are Haudenosaunee and our Great Law of Peace, the Kaianerakerakowa, requires us to protect the land for future generations and to do so peacefully. The actions that we have taken are out of rational desperation to defend the survival of our people.

We make this statement in solemn recognition of the ongoing criminalization of our men and women who have been involved in defending our rights. While Canada and Ontario have not been serious about a negotiated solution with the Haudenosaunee, it is clear that they are serious about putting our people in jail. Many of our people have suffered jail terms, bail and probation conditions that cause our people to violate our own law and police abuses. While our resolve is unshaken, we acknowledge the suffering experienced by our children, our family and our communities as a direct result of criminal charges laid against our people.

The Guswhenta, the Two Row Wampum, is a treaty that requires each of our nations to respect our separateness: "Neither of us will make compulsory laws or interfere in the internal affairs of the other." The present approach by Canada of engaging in bad faith negotiations and pressing criminal charges when we take action to preserve our rights is unacceptable. We propose the following two solutions:

We ask that Canada and Ontario immediately engage with the Haudenosaunee to develop a Guswhenta Protocol for establishing a dialogue about Canada's concerns with Haudenosaunee persons alleged to have engaged in unacceptable or "criminal" conduct, making it a priority to address those situations involving efforts by Haudenosaunee people to preserve their rights; and

We also ask that Crown Attorneys who are involved in the prosecution of people involved in reclamation activity make every effort possible to implement the spirit of the Guswhenta.

## Glossary

In Issue 12, we began building a glossary of terms that are relevant to the discussions and articles printed in *4struggle*. Last issue we defined the following terms: Capitalism, Colonialism, Imperialism, Democracy (liberal bourgeois capitalist), Fascism, White supremacy, Patriarchy, Working class and Proletariat

An editing error lead to the omission of two important terms, which we include here:

**Lumpen-proletariat:** The unemployed working class. The working class removed from the "point of production" that make-do economically through the black market or underground economy. While historically overlooked by the left, many revolutionaries have argued the necessity of organizing with the lumpen-proletariat as a focus for successful revolutionary struggle.

**Bourgeoisie:** The middle class, distinguished from the working class primarily by their pro-capitalist and anti-working class bias. While the middle class / bourgeoisie work, their sympathy with the ruling class may be explained by the fact that they own property (stocks, their own homes, land, etc) and that their incomes are generally higher than those of the traditional working class because they have managerial or professional jobs.

In this issue, we feature glossary terms submitted by one of our subscribers. We hope these propel people forward in their studies and encourage others to submit their own terms or comment on terms already defined.

BY MARLAND HENRY GIBSON

**Abstract:** A theoretical summary of essentials apart from application to a particular interest. An argument that treats a question in the most general or vague terms and expressions.

**Authoritarian personality:** A person who has the dual requirements of conformity, accompanied by compulsive sadism.

**Austerity measures: Enforced or extreme economy, simple and unadorned,** giving little or no scope for pleasure. The imperialist International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (aka the World Bank) introduces such to its victims via its Structural Adjustment Program/Plan (SAP) dictates, which are imposed on all countries that request finance/development loans from major lending institutions, most notably the International Monetary Fund. A parallel government established by the global financial institutions is installed in the debtor country and the SAP tool is utilized to transfer the poor country's wealth (mineral resources, raw materials, cheap human slave labor and local market economy, etc.) to the capitalist exploiters via destructive draconian measures such as cutting social welfare spending/services which provide for the people's basic human needs; removing food subsidies; privatizing the agricultural sector and importing expensive food stocks from the imperialist countries that the locals cannot afford; removing fuel subsidies that kept fuel costs down; creating high unemployment by firing government workers and with the help of imperialist agent U.S. Agency for International Development; drafting oppressive and exploitive labor laws that create \$2.8 hour work days, depress wage levels to \$1 to \$2 per day, ease conditions to fire workers and outlaw the right to strike, and prohibit the formation of workers' unions; devaluing and debasing the local currency by decoupling it from gold and silver standards and forcing the printing of excess paper currency, which in turn strengthens the U.S. dollar and collapses the local currency; deregulating and privatizing the state/people owned enterprises (the public sector) and forcing the monopolization of critical infrastructure industries like electricity and water distribution, banking, telecommunications and other sectors; cheapening the cost of exports, wholesaling barely above the slave labor costs; lowering or completely eliminating trade tariffs on imports and eliminating internal price-controls, so imperialist country products can be sold to locals at maximum profits; and militarization buildup to repress uprisings.

**Authoritarian (dictatorship):** Favoring blind submission to authority and a concentration of power in a leader or an elite not constitutionally responsible to the people.

**Brainwashing:** A calculated merciless campaign of indoctrination meant to paralyze a person's capacity to think, judge, and understand political, social, economic and religious matters for themselves. It is a system that inculcates people with self-serving regimented ideas by teaching them what to think, not how to think, and whose aim is to destroy the ability of the target to see the exploitation of oppression to which they are subjected and to understand its causes.

**Cadre:** Framework - a nucleus of trained, experienced activists in an organization who are capable of assuming leadership and/or training and educating others to perform functional roles.

**Chauvinism:** An undying or irrational love for one's own sex, class, nationality, or race. Undue partiality or attachment to one group resulting in an attitude of superiority towards its opposite.

**Concrete:** To make actual, real and tangible; treating a question with conclusions that are precise, definite, practical and specific.



*At 4strugglemag, we encourage our readers to read about, discuss and write about the struggles that are happening around the world. As always we welcome your reflections on any topic, but we are particularly seeking analysis of the following issues for Issue 14:*

## Coup in Honduras

On June 28, Honduran soldiers ousted President Manuel Zelaya from his bed and exiled him at gunpoint to Costa Rica, halting his controversial push to redraw the constitution (which the president says benefits the country's elites) but spurring fresh concerns about democratic rule across Latin America. Zelaya, a close ally of Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez, called the action a kidnapping, and said he was still president. Later, Honduras's Congress named congressional leader Roberto Micheletti as his successor. Although President Barack Obama said he was "deeply concerned" about the situation, critics have argued that the State Department and U.S. Congress financed and advised the Honduran actors and organizations which participated in the coup, and authorized the coup with tacit complicity and refusal to withdraw military support to the Honduran forces.

## Free Trade Massacre in Peru

In early June, Peruvian police in the northern Amazon region attacked a group of Indigenous people who since April had been peacefully protesting a lack of consultation about development on their land, and who are opposed to free trade agreements with Canada, the United States and the European Union. The attack resulted in between 30-60 deaths, including a number of police apparently killed by Indigenous protesters in defence and retaliation. Only days later, Canadian activists were appalled by the quick passage in the Senate of Bill C-24 (the Canada-Peru Free Trade Agreement) in the middle of a human rights crisis in Peru.

## Election Protests in Iran

Iran has had a quasi theocracy since the ouster of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in the Islamic Revolution of 1979. On June 12, voters went to the polls to choose a new president. Less than two hours after the last of some 40 million paper ballots was cast, the authorities announced that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had been re-elected in a landslide. The announcement of his victory -- in which it was said that he had received more than 60 percent of the vote -- prompted mass protests by demonstrators who claimed that he had stolen the election. Mr. Ahmadinejad's main challenger, Mir Hussein Mousavi, called on supporters and fellow clerics to fight the election results. Protesters poured into the

streets for the largest demonstration since the fall of the Shah. But the country's supreme ruler, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, harshly denounced the demonstrations and turned loose the police, the Revolutionary Guards and the religious militia, the Basij. Days of street battles followed, in which at least 17 people were killed, including a young woman, Neda Agha-Soltan, whose death was captured on video and became a worldwide rallying point. Hundreds of opponents were jailed, and the protests dwindled. The election was certified by the country's Guardian Council and praised by Mr. Ahmadinejad as the "freest" in the world.

## Akwesasne: "No Guns!" - Mohawks vow to resist armed border guards

Canadian Borders Services Agency (CBSA) were due to be armed at the Port of Cornwall crossing on June 1, a policy universally opposed and condemned by the Akwesasne Mohawk Community. Guards abandoned their posts just before midnight, out of fear of reprisals from the community. Protesters have maintained a presence at the site on Cornwall Island in Ontario since then, and been shut down by police on both sides of the border. The Mohawk territory of Akwesasne straddles the jurisdictions of Ontario, Quebec and New York State, and is a major international border crossing between Canada and the United States. CBSA guards began arming in 2007, and there are currently more than 800 armed CBSA guards across Canada. The entire CBSA aims to be armed, in stages, by 2016. "[The Canadian Border Service Agency] is a foreign oppressive force who occupies our sovereign community and territory. (They are) unwelcome, uninvited and now carrying firearms. For lack of a different description, that is considered by some an act of war" - Larry King, member of the Akwesasne Mohawk Territory.



Supporters of Honduras's President Manuel Zelaya demonstrate in front of a tire bonfire in Tegucigalpa.

## "Little Guantanamo": Exposing the CMU

BY DANIEL MCGOWAN  
Spring 2009

As of May 2009, I have been at USP Marion's "Communication Management Unit" or CMU, for roughly nine months and now is a good time to address the misconceptions (and the silence) regarding this unit. I want to offer a snapshot of my day-to-day life here as well as some analysis of what the existence of CMUs in the federal prison system implies (1). It is my hope that this article will partially fill the void of information that exists concerning the CMU, will help dispel rumors, and will inspire you to support those of us on the inside fighting the existence of these isolation units — in the courts and in the realm of public opinion.

It is best to start from the beginning — or at least where my story and the CMU meet. My transfer here is no different from that of many of the men here who were living at Federal Correctional Institutions (normal prisons) prior to the genesis of the CMUs. On May 12, 2008, on my way back from a decent lunch, I was told to report to "R&D" (receiving and discharge). I was given two boxes and half an hour to pack up my meager possessions. After complying I was placed in the SHU (secure housing unit or "hole") and put on a bus the next day. There was no hearing and no information given to me or my attorneys — only after a day was I told I was on my way to Marion, Illinois' CMU.

Hearing the term "CMU" made my knees buckle as it drummed up some memory I had of the infamous 'control units' at Marion (closed in 1995 and replaced by Florence ADX: the lone Federal "Supermax" prison). Then it hit me. The lawyers, in challenging the application of the terrorist enhancement in my case made the prescient argument that if I receive the enhancement, the Bureau of Prisons (BoP) would use that to place me in the CMU at FCI Terre Haute, Indiana (at the time just 5 months old) (3). In fact, on the way to FCI Sandstone in August 2007, I not only saw the CMU but met one of its residents while in transit. Let me back up and offer a brief history of the Communication Management Units.

The CMU I reside in, at USP Marion, received its first prisoner in May 2008 and when I arrived, held about 17 men, the majority of whom were Muslim. Currently, the unit has 25, with a capacity of 52 cells. In April 2009, we received seven new people, all of whom were from the CMU at FCI Terre Haute. The unit is overwhelmingly Muslim with 18 men identifying as such. Most, but not all of the prisoners (4), have so-called terrorism cases. According to a BoP spokesperson, the unit "will not be limited to inmates con-

victed of terrorism-related cases though all of the prisoners fit that description" (5). Others have prison disciplinary violations or allegations related to communication and the misuse of telephones etc. Here, almost everyone has a terrorism related case — whether it is like my case (destruction of property characterized as 'domestic terrorism') or conspiracy and 'providing material aid' cases.

Before the Marion CMU opened, there was the original CMU, opened in December 2006 at the former death row at FCI Terre Haute (6). According to early articles, the unit was intended for "second tier terrorism inmates, most of them Arab Muslims and a less restrictive version of the Supermax in Florence, Colorado" (7).

Additionally, BoP Director Harley Lappin, in a July 2008 hearing on the 2009 BoP budget request, said this about the CMUs:

A lot of the more serious offenders, terrorists, were housed at ADX Florence. So, we are ramping up two communications management units that are less restrictive but will ensure that all mail and phone calls of the offenders are monitored on a daily basis (8).

Terre Haute's CMU has 36 men (27 of whom are Muslim) and is roughly comparable to Marion's CMU. The rest of this piece focuses on the latter, in which I have resided and of which I have seen firsthand.

You may be curious about just what a CMU actually is. From my correspondence, I can tell that many correspondents do not know much about what goes on here. I hope this can clear up any misperceptions. According to the BoP,

"The CMU is [sic] established to house inmates who, due to their current offense of conviction, offense conduct or other verified information, require increased monitoring of communication between inmates and persons in the community in order to protect the safety, security, and orderly operations of Bureau facilities and protect the public . . . The CMU is a self-contained general population housing unit." (10)

There are, of course, alternate views to the above definition, including the belief that the CMUs are Muslim units, a political prisoner unit (similar to the HSU operated by the BoP in the 80s) (11), and a punishment unit.

The CMUs have an extremely high Muslim population; here at Marion, it is 65-75%. An overrepresentation of any one demographic in a prison raises constitutional issues of equal protection as well as safety issues. Nowhere in the BoP will you find any group represented in such extreme disproportion. To counter these claims, the BoP brought in a small number of non-Muslims to be used as



proof that the units are not strictly Muslim (an interesting note is that some of the Muslim men here have cases unrelated to terrorism). Does the inclusion of six people that are non-Muslim really negate the claim of segregation though? What are the criteria for determining who comes to the CMU? The BoP claims there are 211 international terrorists (and 1000 domestic terrorists) in their system (12). Yet, the CMUs have no more than 60 men at the present time. Where are the rest of these people? How does the BoP determine who of those 1200 are sent to a CMU and who to normal prisons? These are questions that need to be asked — in court and in the media.

Many of the men here (both Muslim and non) are considered political prisoners in their respective movements and have been engaged in social justice, religious organizations, charities and humanitarian efforts (13). Another conception of the CMU is that it is a location designed to isolate us from our movements and to act as a deterrent for others from those movements (as in 'step outside the line and you too will end up there') (14). The intended effect of long-term housing of this kind is a profound sense of dislocation and alienation. With your mail, email, phones, and visits monitored and no human touch allowed at the visits, it is difficult to feel a connection to "the streets." There is historical evidence of the BoP utilizing political prisons — despite the fact that the Department of Justice refuses to acknowledge the concept of political prisoners in US prisons, choosing to call us "criminal" instead.

The Lexington High Security Unit (HSU) was one such example. Having opened its 16-bed facilities in 1988 and housing a number of female political prisoners (15), the HSU functioned as an isolation unit — underground, bathed in fluorescence, and limited interaction with staff. In the opinion of Dr. Richard Korn, speaking on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union, the unit's goal was:

"... to reduce prisoners to a state of submission essential for their ideological conversion. That failing, the next objective is to reduce them as efficient, self-directing antagonists. That failing, the only alternative is to destroy them by making them destroy themselves." (16)

After an arduous campaign by human rights advocates and supporters, the BoP capitulated, stating it would close its facility (when it did not, it was sued) (17). The judge ruled that the plaintiffs were illegally designated based on their past political affiliations, statements and political beliefs (18). The unit was closed and the women were transferred to other prisons.

The correlations between the HSU and CMU are many and seem to have some of the same goals as well as methods used to designate us here. Knowing they are dealing with people committed to ideals and the movements they are a part of, we were placed here in order to weaken those

connections and harm our relationships. An example is the horrendous strain that the CMU puts on our familial relations — especially our marriages. It was certainly considered by the architects of the CMU that preventing visits that allow human touch for long-term prisoners would have a disastrous impact on our relationships and would lead to weaker inmates.

Finally, the CMU can be viewed as "the stick" — a punitive unit for those who don't play ball or who continue to express political beliefs anathema to the BoP or the US government. Although I am not aware of the BoP's criteria for sending people here (due to their refusal to release specific CMU information), it is curious who is and who is not here. Out of roughly 18 codefendants in my criminal case, I am the only one at a CMU (the remainder of them are at low and medium security prisons). The same goes for a member of the SHAC7 campaign, Andrew Stepanian, one of 6 codefendants in his case who was sent here for the last 6 months of his sentence (19). Other men here have codefendants at the Terre Haute CMU while others have codefendants at normal federal prisons. Despite numerous Freedom of Information Requests (20), the BoP refuses to grant the documents that specify the rules governing transfer to the CMU. Remember, hardly any of the men here have received any disciplinary violations and some have been in general population over 15 years! How can someone be OK in general population for that long and then one day be seen as a communication threat?

So, I have hypothesized about the goals of the CMU. Let me discuss the many problems and injustices associated with the existence of the CMUs.

### Due process

More appropriately, a lack thereof. A term I never thought much about before my imprisonment, due process is:

"...the conduct of legal proceedings according to established rules and principles for the protection and enforcement of private rights, including notice and the right to hearing before a tribunal with the power to decide the case." (21)

I was moved from FCI Sandstone, against my will and at a moment's notice, with no hearing and thus no chance to contest the reason for my transfer. A FOIA request recently received states I was redesignated May 6th, my transfer was signed the next day and I was moved on May 13th with the reason given as "program participation" (22). Since I got here, I have not had a hearing to contest the claims made in the "Notice to Inmate of Transfer to CMU." (23) some of which were woefully inaccurate. Instead, I was told I could utilize the administrative remedy process (which I have done to no avail) and request a transfer after 18 months of "clean conduct" (24).

## One Way to Remember

On Saturday, September 12, 2009 at 10 a.m., the Los Angeles Anarchist Black Cross will host a 5k run/walk/jog/bike through the trails of the Whittier Narrows Regional Park in El Monte, Ca. This run/walk/jog/bike is designed to raise much-needed funds for the ABCF's Watchest program. The Watchest program was created in November of 1994 to provide monetary support to political prisoners (PPs) and prisoners of war (POWs) in North America. Funds for the Watchest are divided and distributed through monthly stipends to PP/POWs who receive little or no financial aid. Prisoners use this money to cover the basic necessities of everyday living. Funds have been used by prisoners to pay for shoes, clothes, as well as assisting their families with what little they can.

Every year, prisoners and supporters of political prisoners organize solidarity runs with Running Down the Walls (Los Angeles). Last year, we had runs in Arcata (CA), Phoenix (AZ), Tucson (AZ), Navasota (TX), Inez (KY) New York (NY) and Massachusetts. We raised just under \$2,000 with funds being distributed between the ABCF Watchest, El Centro Cultural de Mexico, Free Chip Fitzgerald Committee and several other local programs. This year we hope to expand the amount of runs in prisons and other cities, as well as increase the amount of funds raised for community projects. We encourage people to participate in helping us raise funds for the Watchest, which can be done in the following ways:

**Be a runner:** We are asking people or groups who are running to collect as many sponsors for the run as possible. Remember the money received is going to help imprisoned comrades who need your help. The person who collects the most amount of funds will be given a prize for their involvement and dedication to helping our fallen comrades.

**Sponsor a runner:** This can be done through a flat donation to the runner of your choice. We ask from those who wish not to run to actively support those who are running in hopes of collecting as much for our comrades as possible.

**Sponsor Running Down the Walls:** Any amount helps. Contact the Los Angeles Anarchist Black Cross if you wish to simply donate money to the cause.

**Donate to the Watchest:** Send funds directly to the Los Angeles ABCF (PO Box 11223, Whittier, CA 90603) or to the Philadelphia ABCF (PO Box 42129, Philadelphia, PA 19101) Make checks or money orders out only to Tim Fasnacht.

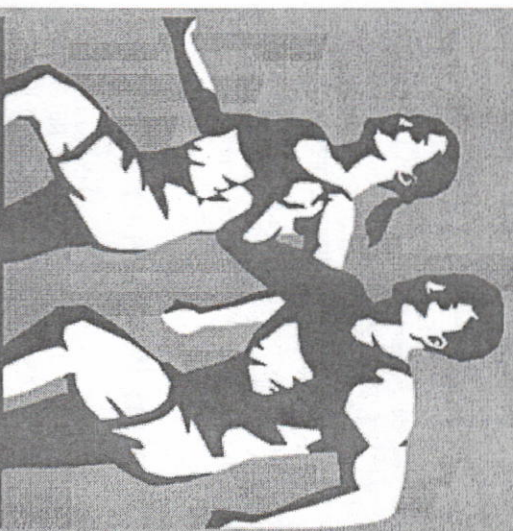
Get involved in the planning of Running Down the Walls: We always need help with organizing the event and we encourage people to contact us if they would like to get involved. You can do this by contacting the L.A. Anarchist Black Cross, [www.abcf.net/la](http://www.abcf.net/la), [la@abcf.net](mailto:la@abcf.net)

Registration fees: \$12 preregistration; \$15, the day of the run. (Make checks out to Tim Fasnacht)

For more information contact the Los Angeles Branch Group of the Anarchist Black Cross Federation

PO BOX 11223  
Whittier, CA 90603  
[www.abcf.net/la](http://www.abcf.net/la)  
[la@abcf.net](mailto:la@abcf.net)

## RUNNING DOWN THE WALLS



September 12, 2009

10 am - 2 pm

Whittier Narrows Regional Park

750 Santa Anita Ave, El Monte, CA 91733

for more information: [www.abcf.net/la](http://www.abcf.net/la)



## Statement on the SF 8 Plea Agreement

JALILA MUNTAQIM  
July 6, 2009

First, I would like to thank all my friends and supporters for their tenacious and tireless work in support of the SF8, especially the San Francisco 8 Support Committee, Committee in Defense of Human Rights, Asian-Americans Committee for the SF 8, Freedom Archives, and many others. I wish to thank the excellent legal team whose unwavering commitment to the task was inspiring. I especially want to thank the lawyers who did the majority of the behind-the-scenes legwork by name: Soffiyah Elijah, Jenny Kang, Julie de Almeida, Heather Hardwick, Rai Sue Sussman, and Lori Flowers. This team of women suffering the testosterone of as many as ten male lead attorneys, plus the eight men accused, truly had their feminist code tested. Naturally, I want to thank the most noted private investigators, Adam Raskin and Nancy Pemberton, whose investigative technique and services were outstanding.

Today we were to start the preliminary hearing but because of our strong legal defense team and growing public support, the California prosecutor offered plea settlements that could not be ignored. The entire group discussed whether I would plead no contest to conspiracy to manslaughter. After some discussion, I reluctantly agreed to take the plea and be sentenced to 3 years probation; 1 year of jail time, credit for time served, concurrent with New York State sentence, dismissing 1st degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder. Also, because of my plea, four other defendants would have all charges dismissed for insufficient evidence. This was a no-brainer especially considering the elder brothers suffered a variety of health issues ranging from high blood pressure, chronic respiratory problems, diabetes, PTSD, and prostate cancer. Although I have my own health issues, in my near 38 years of imprisonment, I believe I am in better shape than all four combined (Ha). In the last 25 years prior to these charges being lodged, the brothers had been living peaceful and productive lives raising their families, and offering community services. During the period from their release on bail to this date, they had been running themselves ragged across the country telling the story of Cointelpro destruction of the Black Panther Party, the Legacy of Torture, and building support for the case. While I would have liked to have continued the legal fight to what I believe would have resulted in complete exoneration of all charges, I know the jury system is fickle. I have seen too many innocent men in prison who fought with the conviction of being innocent after a reasonable plea bargain was offered, and they ultimately lost due to prosecutorial misconduct, defense attorney errors, improper jury instructions by a judge, and/or a fickle

jury. Unfortunately, their loss results in spending decades in prison fighting for a reversal or waiting to be released on parole, or in the worst cases, death row DNA exonerations.

The American judicial system is nowhere near being without flaws, as the overwhelming number of Black men in prison sorely attests. Given these circumstances, my taking this plea is a bitter-sweet win-win. Finally, I would like to thank with profound appreciation my attorneys Daro Inouye, a 30+ year veteran of the San Francisco Public Defender's Office, whose trial experiences and skills are incomparable; and Mark Goldrosen, a remarkable, selfless trial technician and writer whose understanding of both State and Federal law brought the court (and some of the attorneys) to task.

## Eddie Hatcher, Indian activist, dies in prison

FROM THE NEWS & OBSERVER, May 1 2009

Eddie Hatcher, an American Indian activist, who was convicted of murder and attracted worldwide attention when he and an accomplice took hostages at The Robesonian newspaper, died of natural causes in prison. He was 51.

Hatcher died Friday morning in Central Prison, according to a news release from the Department of Correction.

Hatcher brought national attention to charges of corruption in Robeson when Hatcher and a friend stormed the office of the local newspaper brandishing sawed-off shotguns and claiming to have a bomb. They chained the doors and held up to 14 people hostage for 10 hours, with Hatcher in near hysterics claiming his life was in danger because of what he knew of local law enforcement's involvement in cocaine trafficking. Taking over the newspaper building, he said, was the only way to draw attention to the corruption and save his own life.

He surrendered without injuring anyone when then-Gov. James G. Martin agreed to have a task force investigate the claims. Hatcher was acquitted on federal hostage-taking charges but was later found guilty of state kidnapping and weapons charges. He served five years of an 18-year sentence.

In the last six years, 22 members of the Robeson County sheriff's office, including the Sheriff have been hauled into court to face corruption charges, including allegations of drug dealing.

The irony is that all prisoners who violate prison rules are subject to a series of disciplinary hearings in which they could offer their defense. For legal units such as Florence ADX (Supermax) or the control unit program, there exists a codified set of rules and hearings for transfer to these locations (25). The BoP has deliberately ignored this process and has instead transferred us to this special, brand-new CMU without due process. My notice of transfer was given to me 12 days after I arrived!

Similar to the callous disregard for due process (and the U.S. Constitution), there is no "step down" process for the CMU. Unlike the ones that exist at Florence ADX, control units or even the gang units, the CMU has no stages, no requisite amount of time we are to spend here before being sent back to a normal prison (26).

Because these preceding programs are specifically for prison misbehavior, there is a logical and orderly way to finish the program and eventually transfer. For us, the BoP has set up a paradox — if we are here for our offense conduct, which we cannot ever change, how can we reasonably leave the unit? In its "Admissions and Orientation" guide for Marion's CMU, here is what they say:

"Every new commitment to the CMU will be evaluated by his unit team regarding his suitability for incarceration in this institution. If, for some reason, the inmate is deemed not acceptable for confinement in this unit, he will be processed as expeditiously as possible..." (27)

I am still roughly 10 months from my 18-month period in which I must wait before requesting a transfer. Considering the fact that all my remedies have been denied, I am not hopeful about this.]

### CMU as Secret

In addition to the due process and transfer issues, there is the secretive and illegal manner that the CMU was created (Note: for historical perspective, it needs to be stated that the CMU was established roughly halfway through the second term of George W. Bush and his Attorney General Alberto Gonzales).

In April 2006, the BoP proposed a "Limited Communication for Terrorist Inmates" policy (28), which suggested new restrictions for "terrorists" and "terrorism related inmates" such as:

- 1) One 6-page letter per week.
- 2) One 15-minute phone call a month.
- 3) One 1-hour visit a month. (29)

A coalition of civil rights organizations signed a letter of protest criticizing the proposed rules and raising numerous constitutional, practical and ethical objections (30). The outcry appears to have caused the BoP to reconsider it and

just 6 months later, open the CMU at FCI Terre Haute quietly (31). Since the BoP never sought public comment on the new CMU, it certainly appears to be a violation of the Administrative Procedural Act (APA) (32), an argument a federal judge in Miami raised in response to a prisoner's legal challenge to transfer to the CMU (33).

The unit is functionally an open secret. While the BoP circumvented the standard public comment (and feedback process), it has sought to get around this by describing the CMU as a "self-contained general population unit" (34), implying that the unit is legally and penally no different than a normal unit at an FCI. There is no mention of the CMU on the BoP's website (www.bop.gov) or USP Marion's subpage on the same site (35). You will not find extensive Congressional hearings on the subject — other than a July 2008 subcommittee hearing in which it appears that the BoP director was not fully forthcoming on the CMU (36). Letters here are stamped "USP Marion" not CMU, and the unit is called "I Unit" by staff. (An interesting anecdote: while on transit in Winter 2009, I met men from the FCI here and asked them what they knew about I Unit. Without hesitation, they said, "That's where the terrorists are." They informed me this is what BoP Staff routinely told them).

Media queries are met with silence or vague information. Requests by the media to interview me by coming to Marion have been denied — due to it "being detrimental to the safety, security and good order of the institution" (37). There still is no Program Statement on the CMU — a legal requirement, outlining the specific rules of the CMU and its designation criteria.

Because of this, and the general refusal of the BoP to hand over relevant documents through FOIA, it is impossible to determine the specific reasons why one is sent here — and thus, how to contextualize this process. In effect, the CMU was created on the fly, with no eye toward legality; they are free to operate it in whatever manner they choose.

### Communication Management (The promotion of isolation and alienation)

The most painful aspect of this unit, to me, is how the CMU restricts my contact with the world beyond these walls. It is difficult for those who have not known prison to understand what a lifeline contact with our family and friends is to us. It is our link to the world — and our future (for those of us who are fortunate enough to have release dates). Prison authorities and architects are well aware that those with strong family ties and in good communication with their loved ones are well behaved and have significantly lower rates of recidivism. The BoP, in theory, recognizes this by claiming they try to situate us within 500 miles of our homes. Mostly, this is a cruel farce for many prisoners — I have not been within 1000 miles of my family in 2 years.



The most Orwellian aspects of the CMU are in how they manage our communications:

A) Telephones: at my previous prison, I was able to use the phones for 300 minutes a month — days, nights, weekends and holidays — basically at any point I was not in my housing unit (6am-10pm). Here, we receive one 15-minute phone call a week. The call can only take place between 8am and 2:30pm, never on weekends or holidays and must be scheduled one and a half weeks in advance (we can choose a back-up number to call but if neither picks up, we don't get a call) (39). The call is live-monitored and recorded. Not only do we receive one fifth of the minutes granted to other federal prisoners but the call is also very trying for our families — all of whom have day jobs and many of whom have children in school. The CMU requires calls be made in English only — a difficult demand considering over half of the men here speak English as a second language (this restriction is not present at other federal prisons).

B) Visits: At FCI Sandstone, I received up to eight visiting days a month (56 hours) — contact visits in which I could embrace my wife, play cards with my nieces and share vending machine food with my visitors. These visits were my lifeline. I got about twelve of them in eight months and it aided in my adjustment to prison.

The CMU restricts our visits to one four-hour non-contact visit a month. One short visit through two inches of plate glass with cameras hanging overhead and my visitors stuffed in a four-and-a-half by three-and-a-half-foot stuffy booth — a tight squeeze for two (40). The visits can only take place on weekdays from 8am-2pm — no more Christmas or thanksgiving visits — and worse, no physical contact. (Consider what it would be like to have no contact with your loved ones. What if you couldn't hug or kiss your lover, partner, wife, husband? What would that do to you?) I find myself riddled with guilt when I ask friends to spend \$500 to fly across the country, drive three hours (and repeat) for a four-hour non-contact visit. I'm lucky though, having people who will do this. Many of the men here can't afford it or don't want to subject their children to this reality.

C) Mail: We can only send out mail once a day and we cannot visit the mail room to send out packages. We are one hundred-percent reliant on the one staff person who deals with our mail to do so and sending a box home is a laborious procedure. We must leave our envelopes unsealed so that staff can read, copy, scan and send to whatever other agency studies our correspondence. A letter to NYC takes roughly seven to nine days (which should take five). Letters sent abroad, especially those not written in English, could take a month or more — a common complaint of some of my fellow prisoners.

Staff here has an interesting reading of the rules governing legal mail leading to the charge that they open our legal mail (this is the subject of an administrative remedy I filed with the BOP Central Office in Washington DC). The rule states that the lawyer's name must be clearly identified and that the envelope must say "Special Mail- Open only in the presence of inmates" (41) and yet staff has opened my legal mail that said "Law Offices of Jane Doe" stating that it should have said, "Jane Doe, Attorney at Law"! The staff

## RNC protester sentenced to 2 years on bomb charge

BY JAMES WALSH, reprinted from *Star Tribune*

The first of two Austin, Texas, men to plead guilty to making Molotov cocktails during last summer's Republican National Convention was sentenced to two years in federal prison Thursday.

Bradley Neal Crowder, 23, who pleaded guilty in January, had come north to St. Paul in August as part of a group from Texas that intended to disrupt the convention, prosecutors said. He and David Guy McKay, 22, were indicted for filling eight wine bottles with a mixture of gasoline and motor oil while they stayed in an apartment not far from St. Paul's Xcel Energy Center, site of the convention.

McKay, who pleaded guilty in March, is scheduled to be sentenced May 21. U.S. Chief Judge Michael J. Davis sentenced Crowder to three years supervised release after his prison term is completed. Crowder and McKay's case gained national attention for the FBI's use of an undercover informant, longtime activist Brandon Darby, who participated in early planning meetings by the Texas group and rode north with the men to St. Paul in a rented van. Darby said he began working with the FBI when the group's plans for the convention turned violent. McKay insisted at his trial that Darby had entrapped him into making the explosives.

That claim helped end McKay's first trial with a hung jury. McKay dropped that claim and pleaded guilty at the beginning of jury selection for his second trial, after it became clear that prosecutors were going to call Crowder to testify. It was believed that Crowder's testimony would contradict McKay's version of events. Investigators say the men made the Molotov cocktails with the idea of using them to get back at police, who had seized a trailer filled with homemade riot shields and helmets that the Texas group planned to use during demonstrations. The bombs never left the apartment building where they were made, however.

## SF8 Upates

Herman Bell

Herman Bell was supported by a courtroom of supporters on June 29, 2009, as he entered a plea in the SF 8 case. After legal formalities he left the courtroom raising a clenched fist to the crowd. The following statement was issued by his legal team:

Herman Bell Pleads Guilty to Reduced Charge of Voluntary Manslaughter For a Sentence of Five Years Probation Today, June 29, 2009, Herman Bell, one of the SF8, will plead (pled) guilty in Department 22 of the San Francisco Superior Court to the reduced charge of voluntary manslaughter for his role in the killing of San Francisco police officer John Young in 1971. Mr. Bell is charged along with six others with this crime. The other six are still scheduled to go forward with the preliminary hearing beginning on July 6, 2009.

The other six maintain their innocence and Mr. Bell's plea does not in any way incriminate them; Mr. Bell supports the others' innocence. Part of the plea agreement, which will be (was) read in open court, is that Mr. Bell will not be a witness against his comrades and friends and cannot be called to any hearing as a witness by the prosecution.

Mr. Bell's plea is based on his unique situation. Mr. Bell was convicted in 1975 for the killing of two police officers in New York City. He has been in prison for almost thirty-seven years for those convictions. His fight for freedom is in New York, where he will continue to fight for parole. He has been a model prisoner while in New York where he has gained graduate degrees and started programs to help other inmates and the communities from which they come.

Mr. Bell is pleading to the reduced charges of voluntary manslaughter and is, in fact, receiving no punishment based on his admission of guilt. His sentence will be that he will be placed on informal probation for five years and will be allowed to immediately return to New York. He will receive absolutely no additional prison time for his actions. He and his attorneys believe that the resolution in this case will not negatively effect his parole efforts in New York.



The second charge faced by Mr. Bell, conspiracy to kill policemen, will be (was) dismissed. Mr. Bell and his supporters see this resolution as a resounding victory. Mr. Bell was facing life without the possibility of parole in a maximum security prison in California if convicted. The government, through an informant, originally alleged that Mr. Bell was the shooter of Sgt Young. However, it is difficult to believe that the Attorney General of California, who prosecuted this case, would have allowed Mr. Bell to plead to a lesser charge with a sentence of only informal probation if there was credible evidence he had shot Sgt. Young.

Bell and his co-defendants have always maintained that, because of the torture used by the New Orleans Police Department to gain alleged confessions and the lack of new evidence, these charges should never have been brought.

### Charges dropped - Jali pleads no contest - Cisco's case continues

Finally, after years of unified resistance by the brothers and the building of massive support, California State prosecutors were forced to admit that they have insufficient evidence against the San Francisco 8.

On Monday July 6, charges against four of the defendants were dropped and Jali Muntaing pled no contest to conspiracy to commit voluntary manslaughter. The State prosecutor asked the court to sentence him to 12 months calling it "a drop in the bucket." Judge Moscone replied "unless you're the one doing the time." Jali received credit for time served (close to 2 1/2 years in County Jail) and 3 years probation. He will return to New York to fight for parole. See his statement in the post below.

All charges were dismissed today against Ray Boudreaux, Richard Brown, Hank Jones, and Harold Taylor. The courtroom at 850 Bryant Street was packed with SF 8 supporters after a rally of hundreds and a huge "Free SF 8" banner was displayed on the hillside of Bernal Heights to be seen from all over the city. This is finally the disposition of a case that should never have been brought in the first place," announced attorney Sofiyah Elijah. Francisco Torres still faces a court hearing on August 10. Francisco steadfastly maintains his innocence according to his attorney Charles Bourdon who intends to file a motion to dismiss the charges against his client.



# Health GAP Founder Alan Berkman, MD, Dies

From [alanberkman.com](http://alanberkman.com)

Alan Berkman, MD, a renowned HIV/AIDS doctor and founder of Health GAP (Global Access Project), died of cancer on June 5.

Berkman was a longtime advocate for social justice in health care, sneaking behind government barricades to provide medical care to Native American freedom fighters at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, and treating prisoners injured during the Attica Uprising in New York. When he was arrested for removing a bullet from an activist's leg, Berkman refused to testify before a federal grand jury and spent years in prison.

While incarcerated, Berkman advocated for improved medical treatment for his fellow inmates; after his release, he continued to speak out about poor conditions in federal correctional facilities. He then went on to become medical director of Highbridge Woodcrest Center in the Bronx, New York, one of the first skilled nursing facilities for people living with HIV. He later joined the faculty of Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health in New York City, where he dedicated himself to improving treatment access for HIV-positive people around the globe. With that goal in mind, he helped found Health GAP in 1999.

In a statement, Health GAP steering committee member and AIDS activist Jamila Headley described Berkman's life as "so well lived, firmly rooted in a genuine commitment to social justice that led him beyond concern to action, which he sustained for his entire life. His death is such a loss, but he has truly given all of us so much—his time, his passion, his friendship and advice, his ideas, his investment in making the expansion of treatment access possible."

On May 21, Berkman was honored with Health GAP's 2009 Global Health Justice Award alongside David Hoos, MD, MPH. The award has since been renamed the Dr. Alan Berkman Global Health Justice Award.

Details about the public memorial to be scheduled soon will be posted at [www.healthgap.org](http://www.healthgap.org) and here. Donations should be made, in lieu of flowers, to the Alan Berkman Fund c/o Health GAP (please write Alan Berkman Fund in the memo line) and mail to 429 West 127th Street, 2nd Floor or donate on line at [www.healthgap.org/donate.htm](http://www.healthgap.org/donate.htm) (again, please write Alan Berkman Fund in the memo section)

Just two weeks ago, Health GAP honored Dr. Alan Berkman with the 2009 Global Health Justice Award along with Dr. David Hoos. In the future, this award will be renamed the Dr. Alan Berkman Global Health Justice Award in honor of this great leader, organizer and AIDS warrior.

Dr. Alan Berkman

Our comrade, you were a healer, a soldier, an activist, a thinker, a doer. You were a genuine and good human being, a father and a husband, a friend and more.

Many will miss you, many will remember you, and this certainly includes many many current and former political prisoners.

With respect and love we will remember you comrade.

Jaan Laaman



looks for any reason to disqualify our legal mail as protected and gather intelligence this way. In doing so, they violate the sanctity of the attorney-client confidentiality principle.

Most of my violations have been petty—a package has more than twenty pieces of paper or a friend kindly enclosed stamps. A few instances though amount to censorship and a limiting of political expression and dialogue. See Appendix B for a detailed discussion of these instances.

D) Media Contact: Although requests have been made to interview people in the CMU, none have been granted to date. This is a violation of the spirit of the BoP's own media policy (42). There is an imperative on the Bureau's part to control and ultimately suppress information on the CMU from making it to a mass audience.

## Daily life at the CMU

Neither one of the two CMUs were built for long-term habitation. The Marion CMU was the site of the Secure Housing Unit (SHU), the USP that closed here in 2005. Terre Haute's CMU is in "D-wing"—the site of the former federal death row.

The CMU was seemingly converted to its current use with the addition of televisions, steel tables, and new wiring and yet it is not suitable for long-term use due to its "open cell" design (i.e. with bars). With twenty-five prisoners, our movements are restricted to two housing ranges (hallways about one hundred by twelve feet); a recreation range where we also eat (consisting of seven cells with a computer, typewriter, barber shop, religious library, social library, art room and recreational equipment); and a small rec yard (all concrete, a lap equals one-eighteenth of a mile, four cages with two basketball hoops, one handball court, a weather awning with tables and some sit-up benches). We are lucky to be visited daily by a resident bird population of doves and blackbirds, and overhead, the occasional hawk or falcon (ironically, as I write this, I overhear warnings from staff that if we continue to feed the birds, we will receive violations). The appearance of the yard with its cages, concrete, and excessive barbed wire has earned it the nickname "Little Guantanamo" (of course a punitive unit with seventy-five percent Muslims also contributes to the name as well).

The conditions here are not dire—in fact, the horror stories I have heard over the last two years have convinced me it is far worse at many prisons and yet, I believe it is important to be descriptive and accurate—to dispel fears (about violence, for instance) but also to demonstrate just how different life is for us at the CMU.

There are many things we lack here that other prisons in the federal system have to offer:

1. A residential drug/alcohol program: despite at least one person here having completion of it ordered by the court.
2. Enough jobs for the prisoners here: There is not nearly enough jobs for all the men here and most are extremely low paying.
3. UNICOR: This is Federal Prison Industries which has shops at many federal prisons (including this one outside the CMU). These jobs pay much more, allow men to pay their court fees, restitution and child support and, as the BoP brags, teaches people job skills.
4. Adequate educational opportunities: Until recently, we did not have GED or vocational programs. Due to inmate pressure and persistence, we now have both of those as well as a few prisoner-taught classes but no college courses at all.
5. Access to staff on a daily basis: At other federal prisons, you are able to approach staff members at lunch every day, including the Warden. Here, we get (at most) two quick walk-throughs a week, usually taking place early in the morning. You are often left waiting days to resolve a simple question.
6. Law library access: We have a very small law library here with only twenty-five percent of the books required by law. We can only request books twice weekly and those are only delivered if the other nine hundred prisoners at the adjacent Medium are not using them. We lack Federal Court and Supreme Court reports as well as books on Immigration Law (fifty percent or more of the men here face deportation). This lack of access makes for an arduous and ineffective research path.
7. Computers: We have four computers for our email system (two for reading, one for printing and one that we were told would be for legal but it still isn't working). Unlike my previous prison, where we had forty computers with a robust computer-class program, or like other prisons that teach a vocational computer course, we have no such thing.
8. Access to general population: Being in an isolation unit makes for a situation in which we cannot have organized sports leagues and tournaments due to not having enough people at all. This may not seem crucial but sports are a very useful diversion from the stress of prison life and separation.

After reading the preceding sections, perhaps like me you are wondering what really is the purpose of the CMU. In short, the CMU is Florence ADX-LITE for those men whose security points are low and present no real problems to staff. From my interactions with the men here, I can say with certainty, that people here are remarkably well-behaved and calm—many without any disciplinary violations. If these men, like myself, don't get in trouble, and have been in the system for some time, why are we here? Consider my case.



My short time in prison prior to coming to the CMU consisted of two months at MDC Brooklyn and eight months at FCI Sandstone. I had never gotten in trouble and spent my days as a clerk in psychology, working toward a Master's degree, reading, writing and exercising. My goal was to get closer to home and my loved ones. In April 2008, I filed a "hardship transfer" request due to my mother's illness and her inability to travel to Minnesota to visit me. I had my team meeting, and my security points were lowered. Weeks later, I was moved to the CMU.

The irony is that I was moved to the CMU to have my communication managed, but what changed in that one year to justify this move? If I was a danger, then why did the BoP house me in a low-security prison? The same applies to many of the men here—some have been in general population for twenty years and then suddenly a need to manage their communication is conjured up. During my pre-CMU time, I had used 3500 phone minutes and sent hundreds of letters. If there was a problem with my communication, shouldn't the BoP have raised this with me? My notice stating their rationale for placing me here attributed it to me "being a member and leader in the ELF and ALF" and "communicating in code" (43). But if this is true, then shouldn't I have been sent to the CMU as soon as I self-reported to prison in July 2007?

The CMUs were crafted and opened under the Bush administration as some misguided attempt to be tough on the "war on terror". This unit contains many prisoners from cases prosecuted during the hyper-paranoid and over-the-top period after 9/11 and the passage of the USA Patriot Act (44). The number of prosecutions categorized as terrorism-related more than doubled to reach 1,200 in 2002 (45). It seemed that every other week, there was some plot uncovered by overzealous FBI agents—in Lackawanna, NY, Miami, FL, Portland, OR, and Virginia and elsewhere (never mind the illegal wiretaps and unscrupulous people used in these cases). These cases may not be headlines anymore but these men did not go away—they were sent to prison and, when it was politically advantageous for Bush, transferred to the CMUs. The non-Muslim populations of these units (although definitely picked judiciously) were sent there to dispel charges that the CMUs were exclusively Muslim units.

The codified rationale for all prisoners being transferred here are "contact with persons in community require heightened control and reviews" (46) and "your transfer to this facility for greater communication management is necessary to the safe, secure, and orderly function of Bureau institutions."



...". Should an increase in monitoring of communication mean a decrease in privileges? If the goal is to manage our contact with the outside world, shouldn't the BoP hire enough staff so that we can maintain the same rights and privileges as other prisoners (since the party line is that we are not here for punishment)? The reality is the conditions, segregation, lack of due process and such are punishment regardless of whether the BoP admits it or not.

#### Forward!

Where to from here, then? Does the new President and his Attorney General take issue with segregation? Will Obama view the CMU, as he did with Guantanamo Bay, as a horrible legacy of his predecessor and close it? Many people are hopeful for an outcome like that. On April 7th, 2009, Mr. Obama, while in Turkey, said, "The United States will not make war on Islam," and that he wanted to "extend the hand of friendship to the Muslim world" (47). While that sounds wonderful, what does that look like in concrete terms? Will he actualize that opinion by closing the CMU? Or will he marry the policy of Bush and condone a secret illegal set of political units for Muslims and activists? What of the men here? Will he transfer us back to normal prisons and review the outrageous prosecutions of many of the CMU detainees? If it can be done with (former) Senator Ted Steven's case, it can be done here.

While lawsuits have been filed in both Illinois and Indiana federal courts, what is needed urgently is for these units to be dragged out into the open. I am asking for your help and advocacy in dealing with this injustice and the mindset that allows a CMU to exist. Please peruse the resource section at the end of this article and consider doing something. I apologize for the length of this piece—it was suggested to me (by people way smarter than myself) that it would be best to start from the beginning and offer as many details as possible. I hope I gave you a clearer idea of what's going on here. Thank you for all your support and love—your letters are a bright candle in a sea of darkness.

In struggle, with love, Daniel McGowan

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PO Box 1000  
Marion, IL 62959

*Endnotes, acknowledgements, and inspiration relating to this article are at the back of the magazine.*

## Political Prisoner Profile: Sundiata Acoli

Sundiata Acoli (born in 1939, as Clark Edward Squire), a New African political prisoner of war, mathematician, and computer analyst, was born January 14, 1937, in De-catur, Texas, and raised in Vernon, Texas. He graduated from Prairie View A & M College of Texas in 1956 with a B.S. in mathematics and for the next 13 years worked for various computer-oriented firms, mostly in the New York area.

During the summer of 1964 he did voter registration work in Mississippi. In 1968 he joined the Harlem Black Panther Party and did community work around issues of schools, housing, jobs, child care, drugs, and police brutality.

In 1969 he and 13 others were arrested in the Panther 21 conspiracy case. He was held in jail without bail and on trial for two years before being acquitted, along with all other defendants, by a jury deliberating less than two hours.

Upon release, FBI intimidation of potential employers shut off all employment possibilities in the computer profession and stepped-up COINTELPRO harassment, surveillance, and provocations soon drove him underground.

In May 1973, while driving the New Jersey Turnpike, he and his comrades were ambushed by N.J. state troopers. One companion, Zayd Shakur, was killed, another companion, Assata Shakur, was wounded and captured. One state trooper was killed and another wounded, and Sundiata was captured days later.

After a highly sensationalized and prejudicial trial he was convicted of the death of the state trooper and was sentenced to Trenton State Prison (TSP) for life plus 30 years consecutive.

Upon entering TSP he was subsequently confined to a new and specially created Management Control Unit (MCU) solely because of his political background. He remained in MCU almost five years, ... let out of

the cell only ten minutes a day for showers and two hours twice a week for recreation.

In September 1979, the International Jurist interviewed Sundiata and subsequently declared him a political prisoner. A few days later prison officials secretly transferred him during the middle of the night to the federal prison system and put him en route to the infamous federal concentration camp at Marion, Illinois, although he had no federal charges or sentences. Marion is one of the highest security prisons in the U.S., also one of the harshest, and there Sundiata was locked down 23 hours a day .... In July 1987 he was transferred to the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas.

In the fall of 1992, Sundiata became eligible for parole. He was not permitted to attend his own parole hearing and was only allowed to participate via telephone from USP Leavenworth. Despite an excellent prison work, academic and disciplinary record, despite numerous job offers in the computer profession, and despite thousands of letters on his behalf, Sundiata was denied parole. Instead, at the conclusion of a 20 minute telephone hearing, he was given a 20-year hit, the longest hit in New Jersey history, which dictates that he must do at least 12 more years before coming up for parole again.

The Parole Board's stated reason for the 20-year hit was Sundiata's membership in the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army prior to his arrest, the receipt of hundreds of "Free Sundiata" form letters that characterized him as a New African Prisoner of War, and the feeling that the punitive aspects of his sentence had not been satisfied and that rehabilitation was not sufficiently achieved. The real reason for the 20-year hit is to attempt to force Sundiata to renounce his political beliefs and to proclaim to the world that he was wrong to struggle for the liberation of his people.

Write Sundiata Acoli:

Sundiata Acoli #39794-066  
(Squire)  
P.O. Box 1000  
FCI Otisville  
Otisville, NY 10963-1000

[sundiataacoli.org](http://sundiataacoli.org)





riots, 28 in all, although most were whited-out of the news media while across the country, prison officials instituted a nation wide federal prisons lock down. The disparity in crack/powder cocaine sentencing laws remains to date; the only change made was the removal of the C-SPAN TV channel from all federal prisons' TVs.

Only two prison elements grew faster than the African prison population. One was the number of jobs for prison guards and the other was prison slave labor industries. A California guard with a high school diploma makes \$44,000 after 7 years which is more than the state pays its PhD public university Associate Professors and is \$10,000 more than its average public school teacher's salary. The national ratio for prisons is one guard for each 4.38 prisoners, usually Black or others of color, they hire another prison guard, usually White, since most prisons are built in depressed, rural White areas to provide jobs to poor, unemployed White populations.

After decades of the U.S. loudly accusing China of using prison labor in their export products, the U.S., prison products to the public. It set off a stampede by Wall Street and private corporations – Smith Barney, INM, AT&T, TWA, Texas Instruments, Dell Computers, Honda, Lexus, Spalding, Eddie Bauer, Brill Manufacturing Co., and many others – to shamelessly invest in prisons, set up slave labor factories in prisons and to exploit every facet of the prison slave labor industry for super profits while callously discharging civilian workers for prison slave laborers.

From 1980 to 1994, prisoners increased 221 percent, prison industries jumped an astonishing 358 percent, and prison sales skyrocketed from \$392 million to \$1.31 billion. By the year 2000, it is predicted that 30 percent of prisoners (or 500,000) will be industry workers producing \$8.9 billion in goods and services.

Although crime has been decreasing for 5 straight years, as we approach the new millennium, we find that prison expansion has continued at record pace and that the prison population has mushroomed over the last decade to an astonishing 1.75 million souls – the majority of whom are Black period – not counting the 675,000 on parole and the 3,400,000 on probation for a grand sum of 6 million people under the jurisdiction of the Criminal "Justice" System. The prisons/jails have been majority Black since 1993 when Blacks ascended to 55 percent. Other prisoners of color made up 18 percent and Whites shrunk to 27 percent of the prison population. There are now over 2 Blacks for every White prisoner, and the ration increases daily.

The incarceration of women continues to accelerate. There are over 90,000 women in prison today, 54 percent are women of color and 90s percent of women in prison are single mothers. Upon imprisonment they lose contact with their children, sometimes forever. There are 167,000 children in the U.S. whose mothers are incarcerated.

The term "crime" has become a code word for "Black and other people of color." The cry for "law and order," "lock 'em up and throw away the key," and for "hasher prisons" is heard everywhere. Nothing is too cruel to be done to prisoners. Control units and control prisons abound across the landscape and prison brutality and torture is the order of the day. The "War on Drugs" continues space, by now transparent to all as a "war, actually a pre-emptive strike, on people of color" to knock out our youth – our warrior class – and to decrease our birth rate, destabilize our families, re-enslaves us through mass imprisonment, and ultimately to eliminate us. The threat is serious and real. To ignore it would be at our own peril.

Despite government mass imprisonment of our youth and covertly fomenting deadly internecine wars among Black street gangs, the abhorrence of the African community and persistent "Peace Summits" sponsored by African spiritual, community, and prison leaders have produced, somewhat positive, although checked results.

As we begin to move through the '90s the New African liberation struggle behind the walls finds itself coalescing around campaigns to free political prisoners and prisoners of war, helping to build a national PP/POW organization, strengthening its links on the domestic front, and building solidarity in the international arena. Although the established media concentrates on the sensationalism of ghetto crack epidemics, street crime, drive-by shootings, and gang violence, there has been a long quiet period of consciousness-raising in the New African colonies by the committed independence forces. This heightened consciousness of the colonies is just beginning to manifest itself through seemingly random sparks and the rise of innovative cultural trends, i.e., Rap/Hip Hop, "message" music, culturally designed hair styles, dissemination of political/cultural video cassettes, resprouting of insurgent periodicals, and the resurrection of forgotten heroes, all of which presage an oppressed people getting ready to push forward again.

The New African liberation struggle behind the walls now follows the laws of its own development, paid for in its own blood, intrinsically linked to the struggle of its own people, and rooted deep in the ebb and flow of its own history. To know that history is already to know its future development and direction.

*My sincere appreciations to Zakiyyah Rashada, Nancy Kurshan, Steve Whitman, Joan McCarty, and Walce Shakur, for providing prison source data used in this writing. Any incorrect interpretations of the data are strictly mine. Also my warm gratitude to Mtuwma Imani for her typing, editing and helpful suggestions in the updating of the original version.*

## ACLU suit to challenge isolation prisons

BY DEAN KUISPER, from the *Los Angeles Times*  
June 18, 2009

Civil rights activists plan to file a lawsuit today contesting the transfer of a Tunisian American prisoner to a federal prison facility that some inmates have dubbed "Little Guantanamo."

The suit by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of Sabri Benkahla could be the first of many challenging the secretive units, which drastically restrict outside contact.

Benkahla was transferred to the Communications Management Unit in Terre Haute, Ind., in 2007, eight months after his conviction on perjury and obstruction of justice charges in a terrorism case. Prosecutors contended that he lied to a grand jury about his contact with an alleged Al Qaeda fundraiser and other terrorism suspects.

The Terre Haute unit opened in 2006. Another began operations last year at the federal prison in Marion, Ill.

The suit charges that the federal Bureau of Prisons violated Benkahla's right to due process by pulling him out of the Northeast Ohio Correctional Center with no transfer paperwork, no hearing and no opportunity to contest his transfer beforehand. It also questions the legality of the units.

Similar suits are being prepared by the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York and by attorneys of other inmates, calling the specialized units an unwarranted expansion of the war on terrorism.

Inmates in the units get one 15-minute phone call a week and two two-hour visits a month. They have access to computers, a library, a basketball court and a religious library. Though the rules are more restrictive than those of most federal prisons, they are not as strict as the supermax facility in Florence, Colo., which houses terrorists such as unabomber Theodore Kaczynski.

The Bureau of Prisons said the list of inmates in the units was not a matter of public record. It said it needed to monitor communications involving the prisoners because they posed a public-security risk.

"The Communications Management Unit (CMU) was established to house inmates who, due to their current offense of conviction, offense conduct, or other verified information, require increased monitoring of communications between the inmate and persons in the commu-

nity in order to protect the safety, security and orderly operation of Bureau facilities, and to protect the public," the bureau said in written response to questions from *The Times*. But civil rights attorneys contend that the communications restrictions serve another purpose.

"These are political prisons," says Rachel Meeropol, a staff attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights. "These people are being targeted to limit their ability to communicate with the outside world, and to limit their ability to be political people."

David Shapiro, an attorney with the ACLU National Prison Project working on Benkahla's case, said, "The fact that somebody like Sabri is in the CMU really shows the need for better procedures before people are thrown in there and kept in there indefinitely."

Among the inmates at Marion is environmental activist Daniel McGowan, who was convicted in 2007 of burning a lumber company office in Oregon and facilities at an Oregon tree farm that marketed hybrid trees. Federal Judge Ann Aiken added a "terrorism enhancement" to his sentence for the political nature of his acts, resulting in a seven-year term.

In May 2008, McGowan was returning to his cell from lunch at Sandstone, a minimum-security prison in Minnesota, when guards told him to pack.

"My knees kind of buckled when I heard the term 'CMU,'" McGowan said in an interview with *The Times*. "I was on this bus, and I realized, 'Oh, my God. This is pretty much what my lawyer had said.' She said [to the judge], 'If you give him the terrorism enhancement, the BOP will treat him differently.'"

McGowan thinks he was put in the unit because he remained in contact with other activists and published a blog. Lauren Regan, executive director of the Civil Liberties Defense Center and lead attorney in McGowan's case, notes that none of McGowan's co-defendants ended up in the CMU.

"What's different about Daniel?" she said. "The only difference is the outreach that he was doing and the voice that he had behind bars."

Benkahla was studying in Medina, Saudi Arabia, in 2003 when Saudi agents picked him up and shipped him back to the United States to face trial in Virginia on charges of providing material support to the Taliban. He was acquitted in 2004. Federal prosecutors soon called him back before a grand jury, where he lied under oath about e-mail and phone contact with suspected jihadists during travels to Pakistan and possibly Afghanistan. Among the evidence federal prosecutors had were e-mails in which Benkahla talked of "studying in Afghan," and traveling



to a place "far, far away" that was "top secret." Because the grand jury was part of a terrorism investigation, his recommended three-year sentence was extended to 10 years.

The ACLU lawsuit asks that Benkahl be transferred out of the CMU and that the units be shut down pending full approval under the process required by the Federal Administrative Procedures Act. The lawsuit maintains that the Bureau of Prisons violated the provisions of the act by failing to issue a public notice or solicit comments when it set up the units. The bureau contends that existing federal regulations allow it to set the conditions of prisoners' confinement.

## Managing challenging behaviour

BY JOHN BOWDEN, HMP GLENOCHIL.

Reprinted from *Inside Time* - [www.insidetime.org](http://www.insidetime.org)

*John Bowden, long time prison resister and anti-authoritarian, works closely with our friends at Bristol ABC in England. Check them out at [bristolabc.wordpress.com](http://bristolabc.wordpress.com).*

MCBS extends the current control unit regime whereby the Prison Service 'manages' prisoners perceived to be a 'problem' by consigning them to Close Supervision Centre (CSC) facilities and allows CSC-type control measures to be used on ordinary segregated prisoners. CSCs are the most recent in a long line of 'control units' and 'special units'. They came into existence in 1998, when the Prison Rules were amended to allow a small number of prisoners to be consigned to behaviour modification units from where they can only return to the mainstream prison system after 'progressing' through a number of levels. There are currently three units (Woodhill, Whitmoor and Wakefield prisons). In addition there are 'designated Rule 46' cells in Long Lartin, Frankland and Belmarsh segregation units, where CSC prisoners who refuse to 'co-operate' or are not 'progressing' are sent on 'lay-downs' for lengthy periods.

Produced by the Prison Service High Security Prisons Group in January 2009 at the same time as a new 'CSC Referral Manual', the MCBS policy document states that its purpose is: 'to provide a framework for the management of prisoners whose behaviour is dangerous, disruptive and particularly challenging to manage whilst in custody'. In fact that 'framework' is structured as an entire apparatus of surveillance, control and repression with a presence in every prison. The strategy then facilitates the removal of 'difficult' prisoners into control units operating a 'robust management approach' - in practice a regime of complete isolation from other prisoners but where 'interaction' with staff, who will continue monitoring and reporting, is

compulsory. CSCs have a very high staff to prisoner ratio with all movements and visits being accompanied by large numbers of uniformed officers who, at any sign of non-compliance, react with violence. Two features particularly distinguish the current control unit strategy from earlier attempts to target and isolate specific prisoners. Firstly, the open recruitment of 'non-disciplinary' prison staff (doctors, psychiatrists, probation officers etc) in a 'multi-disciplinary approach' to eradicating dissent in prisons; secondly, a massive broadening of what constitutes 'difficult' behaviour.

The strategic role of uniformed prison staff, governors, doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, probation officers, teachers and even chaplains is well defined in the MCBS and in every prison all are to collaborate in identifying, assessing and recommending prisoners for control unit regimes. All information collated by the local multi-disciplinary staff team will then be forwarded to 'Central Management Group' at Prison Service HQ who, in addition to co-ordinating the transfer of 'difficult' prisoners around the system, will share that information with groups like the 'High Security Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Unit', which suggests that the prison population is being tawled for politically motivated activists.

The Prison Medical Service (PMS), which ran prison healthcare until 2003, was completely unaccountable and doctors were notorious for sanctioning the brutality of uniformed staff and administering psychotropic medication such as large doses of control, rather than medical purposes. During the 1990s, evidence of the collusion by non-uniformed, non-disciplinary staff, such as doctors, in covering up the brutalisation and, in some cases, torture of prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs prison was criticised by Amnesty International and the Chief Inspector of Prisons. Prison healthcare is now run by the NHS, but the MCBS has ensured that the collusion of non-disciplinary staff in the maltreatment of 'difficult' prisoners is once again institutionalised and legitimised.

The MCBS policy document claims that the aims of the current control unit system is to 'remove the most significantly disruptive, challenging and dangerous prisoners from ordinary location and manage them within a small and highly supervised unit' whilst responding to 'the changing nature of the population, with increasing management challenges surrounding gang affiliation and extremism.'

In their determination to blame and stigmatise a minority of 'persistently difficult and challenging prisoners' for the cruelty and ill-treatment inflicted on them, those who enforce the system have always constructed myths around the existence of dangerous prison malcontents and in the process created systems and methods of control that have been used against all prisoners inclined to complain and protest. However, the guidance to prison staff at a local level on criteria for what constitutes 'challenging behav-

able by a mandatory 5-year prison sentence, but it takes 500 grams, or \$50,000 worth of powdered cocaine, more commonly associated with wealthier Whites, before facing the same 5 years. In the mid '90s, 1600 people were sent to prison each week, every three out of four were Black or Latino, with the rate of African women imprisonment growing faster than the African men.

Blacks were 90 percent of the federal crack convictions in 1994, the normal assumption follows that Blacks are the majority of crack users. Wrong! Whites are the majority of crack users but were less than 4 percent of the crack convictions and no White person had been convicted of a federal crack offense in the Los Angeles area since 1986 or ever in Chicago, Miami, Denver, or 16 states according to the 1992 survey. As a result, there are now more African men in prison than in college and 1 out of every 3 African men aged 20-29 are in prison, jail, or on probation or parole. Most of the convictions were obtained by an informant's tainted testimony only, no hard evidence, in exchange for the informant's freedom from prosecution or prison.

After lobbying Congress for a few years, Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), a predominantly White lobby group, succeeded in getting a harsh mandatory sentence lowered for marijuana and LSD convictions. Both drugs are more commonly associated with White offenders and FAMM's success resulted in the release of numerous White offenders from long prison sentences.

Blacks and other prisoners of color patiently waited for similar corrections to be made to the gross disparity between crack and powdered cocaine sentences. Several years passed before the answer came during a 1995 C-SPAN TV live broadcast of the Congressional session debating the disparity in sentencing. Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) member, Maxine Waters' summation speech, typical of those made by Congresspersons in favor of correcting the disparity following:

Mr. Chairman, we have been before this body this evening pointing out the disparity, pointing out the inequality, pointing out the injustice of the system as it operates now. I am surprised at much of the rhetoric and all of these so-called conversations that my friends on the other side of the aisle have been having in minority communities. I am glad to know that my colleagues are going there. I am glad to know that they are communicating. But let me tell my colleagues what the mothers in my community say where I live.

They say: Ms. Waters, why do they not get the big drug dealers? What is this business under Bush that stopped resources going to interdiction? Why is it large amounts of drugs keep flowing into inner cities? Where do they come from and why do not they get the real criminals, Ms. Waters, why is it 19-year olds who wander out into the com-

munity and get a few rock crack cocaine. Why it they end up the Federal system why is it they end up with these 5-year minimum mandatory, up to 10 years mandatory sentences? Why can you not get the big guys?

They say: We believe there is a conspiracy. This is what mothers in these communities say. We believe there is a conspiracy against our children and against our communities. They do not understand it when policymakers get up and say, Oh, it is not interdiction that we should be concerned about. As on say there is a desire for drugs, they are going to continue to flow and what we have got to do is just concentrate on telling them, just say no.

They say: Ms. Waters, we do not understand that and we do not know why a first time offender, who happens to be black or Latino, ends up with a 5 year sentence. And why is the Federal Government targeting our communities? They are targeting white communities who are the major drug abuse. They are targeting our communities from the Federal Level. Thus, our kids go into the Federal system and the whites, who are drug abusers and traffickers, go into the State systems. They get off with their fancy lawyers with probation, with 1 years, with no time and our kids are locked up.

Mr. Chairman, for those of my colleagues who say, well we know it is unfair but just keep letting it go on for a while and we will take a look at it are they out of their minds? How can they stand on the floor of Congress pretending to support a Constitution and a democracy and say, "We know it is not fair, but just let it continue and we may take another look at it?"

When I give them the facts and they know them to be true, and I will say it again. In Los Angeles, the U.S. District Court prosecuted no whites, none, for crack offense, between 1988 and 1994, and my colleagues tell me that they think it may be applied unequally? This is despite the fact that two-thirds of those who have tried crack are white and over one-half of crack regular users are white. This is a fairness issue and it is a race issue.

Mr. Chairman, I do not care how they try and paint it. I do not care what they say. This is patently unfair. It is blatant and my colleagues ought to be ashamed of themselves. It is racist, because their little white sons are not getting up in the system. They are targeted. Our children are. Mr. Chairman, they are going into the Federal system with mandatory sentences and it is a race issue. It is a racist policy.

Despite the best arguments and passionate pleas of CBC member Waters, Jackson-Lee, Conyers, Watts, Fattah, Flukes, Lewis, Mfume, Payne, Rush, Stokes, Scott, and similar speeches by non-CBC members Clayton, Baker, Frank, Schroeder and Traficant, the Congress voted 316 to 96 to continue the same 100 to 1 disparity between crack and power cocaine sentences. Instantly, prison exploded in



sationalism of ghetto crack epidemics, street crime, drive by shootings, and gang violence, there was a parallel long, quiet period of consciousness rising in the New African colonies by the committed independence forces. The heightened consciousness of the colonies began to manifest itself through apparent random sparks of rebellion and the rise of innovative cultural trends, i.e., RAP/HIP "message" music, culturally designed hair styles, dissemination of political/cultural video cassettes, resprouting of insurgent periodicals, and the resurrection of forgotten heroes; all of which presaged an oppressed people getting ready to push forward again. Meanwhile, the U.S. began building the ADX Control Prison at Florence, Colorado, which would both supersede and augment USP Marion, Illinois. ADX at Florence combined, in a single hi-tech control prison complex, all the repressive features and techniques that had been perfected at USP Marion.

In 1992, Fred Hampton, Jr., son of the martyred Panther hero, Fred Sr., was sent behind the walls. He was convicted of firebombing of a Korean "deli" in Chicago in the aftermath of the Simi Valley, California, verdict that acquitted four policemen of the Rodney King beating which set off the Los Angeles riots.

In 1994, Shiriki Uganisha responded to the call of POWs Jalil Muntaqim, Sekou Odinga, Geronimo Ji Jaga, and Mutula Skakur, by hosting a national conference in Kansas City, Missouri, where various NAIM organizations discussed forming periodic negotiations in various cities, a year of holding periodic negotiations in various cities, the discussion bored fruit in Atlanta, Georgia. On August 18, 1995, NAPO, the December 12th Movement, MXGM, The Malcolm X Commemoration Committee (MXCC), the Black Cat Collective (BBC), International Campaign to Free Geronimo, the Sundiata Acoli Freedom Campaign (SAFC), and various other POW and grassroots organizations formally unified under the banner of the New Africans Liberation Front (NALF), headed by Herman Ferguson.

The mid 90s brought the World Trade Center bombing which signaling the success of the U.S. strategy to substitute Islam for the former Soviet Union as the world's new Bogyman. It produced the first foreign Islamic PP/POWs — Amir Abdelgani, Rasheed ClementEl, Sheik Omar Eahman, and others.

The mid decade also brought forth a growing right wing White militia movement that had obviously studied the guerilla tactics and political language of the '60s left wing movements but not its philosophy of avoiding innocent deaths — and which culminated in the bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building causing 168 deaths. Upon arrest, Tim McVeigh, a right-winger and by then the chief suspect usurped the language of the left by claiming POW status. He was subsequently convicted by largely overlooked in the media coverage of his case was McVeigh's first hand verification of U.S. government's involvement

in bringing drugs into this country (and the ghettos) and its use of the police in carrying out assassinations, notable because the overwhelming majority of people killed or assassinated police in this country are people of color.

Timothy McVeigh had been ALL-American boy, a blond haired, blue-eyed patriot who enlisted in the army to defend the American way of life that he so fervently believed in. He rose rapidly through the military ranks (private to sergeant) in two years, and was accepted into the Special Forces: the elite, top 4 percent of the military's forces. There he learned something that average thinking persons of color have known most of their lives but found difficult to prove. McVeigh's own words provide the proof.

In an October 1991, letter to his sister and confidant, Jennifer, McVeigh disclosed his revulsion at being told that he and nine other Special Forces commanders might be ordered to help the CIA, "fly drugs into the U.S. to fund covert operations" and "work hand in hand with civilian police agencies" as "government pain assassins."

Disillusioned and embittered with the U.S. government, McVeigh soon afterwards left military service, gravitated deeper into the right wing militia service, surfaced four years upon his arrest in the Oklahoma City bombing case. The mid '90s found White anarchists Neil Batelli and Matthias Bolton collaborating with Black POWs Ojore Lutalo, Sekou Odinga, and Sundiata Acoli which resulted in the transformation of their local New Jersey Anarchist Black Cross into an ABC Federation (ABCF) which now serves as a role model of the proper way for organizations to provide political and financial support to PP/POWs of all nationalities. The period also witnessed the resprouting of Black revolutionary organizations patterned after the BPP the Black Panther Collective, the Black Panther Militia — along with the NOIs Minister Louis Farrakhan's emergence at the October 16, 1995 Million Man (MMM) in Washington, D.C., as an undeniable force on the New African, Islamic and world stage. In the meantime, the U.S. moved further to the right with the passage of a series of racist, anti-worker legislation. The government passed the NAFTA bill to legitimize the private corporations' policy of sending U.S. jobs overseas. California passed Proposition 209 which killed Affirmative Action programs throughout the state. Then, it floated Proposition 187, whose purpose was to implement statewide racist anti-immigration legislation but failed to pass. The Federal government killed Black voting districts and passed Clinton's Omnibus Crime Bill which greatly increased the number of crime statutes, death penalty statutes, policemen and armaments; arrest of people of color; youths tried as adults; 3-strike convictions, and prison expansion projects.

The so-called "War on Drugs" sent Blacks and other people of color, more commonly associated with crack cocaine, to prison in droves while allowing white offenders to go free. Five grams of crack worth a few hundred dollars is punishable by life in prison. The federal government's involvement in bringing drugs into this country (and the ghettos) and its use of the police in carrying out assassinations, notable because the overwhelming majority of people killed or assassinated police in this country are people of color.

jour' is extremely broad and diverse, and includes behaviour not remotely threatening or challenging to the stability of the prison regime. Apart from obvious 'troublemakers', prisoners considered suitable for transfer to control units include those suffering from mental illness and prone to self-harm and suicide attempts; even a failure to take medication is considered justification for being labelled a 'control problem'. In fact, the MCBS document openly admits that some prisoners in the control unit system will 'have a range of complex and diverse psychological and psychiatric needs'. It is a disgrace that, instead of being provided with specialised medical intervention, these prisoners are subjected to regimes based on sensory deprivation, crude behaviour modification techniques and psychological cruelty.

Apart from the mentally ill, prisoners innocent of any breach of discipline are also susceptible to the attention of MCBS, which is deliberately designed to provide prison staff with a weapon of arbitrary victimisation against any prisoner not absolutely compliant with their authority. Once a CSC referral has been made, the assessment process will consider any 'negative behaviour', from open defiance to 'rudeness and ignoring staff', as sufficient reason to recommend a prisoner for a place in a control unit. But being free of 'negative behaviour' does not guarantee a return to normal location. Indeed, the Referral Manual says: 'Positive behaviour can provide evidence that the prisoner is able to control himself in certain situations. However, if the prisoner is known to manipulate staff, such compliance may actually indicate a risk to others.'

Inevitably, the MCBS considers all 'triggers' to rebellious behaviour to be located within the personalities of the prisoners themselves and to have nothing whatsoever to do with how they're treated by the prison system or its staff. Prisoners who refuse to conform to prison authority are simply 'psychopaths', inherently predisposed to behave destructively, regardless of circumstances and context. Prisoners selected for MCBS or removal to a control unit are issued with an information sheet which informs them — 'It is your behaviour alone that has triggered the decision to manage you in this way/start CSC assessments. You can change your behaviour with or without the help of prison staff.' The message is clear: you will conform to prison authority — or you will be made to do so.

Prisoners referred for CSC 'assessment' are usually moved first to the segregation unit at Long Lartin, where they are subjected to a regime of intimidation and psychological bullying in preparation for the control unit proper. The intention is to push the prisoner to the limits of psychological endurance and eventually render them incapable of fighting back or mustering further resistance. It is punishment by ordeal and for those prisoners already psychologically damaged the descent into serious mental illness is inevitable. Control units are sold to the public as a place to consign the 'worst of the worst' but just as the infamous

Marion control unit in the U.S., which was constructed on this basis, ended up housing political prisoners who were sent there straight from court, the CSC and MCBS are now ready for the state to use whenever it chooses against any prisoners it deems problematic. Those within the Prison Service's High Security Prisons Group who formulated the 'Managing Challenging Behaviour Strategy' are guilty of trying to institutionalise a system of repression that violates the basic human rights of prisoners. And all those who collude and participate in that system of repression; doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, probation officers etc, are equally complicit.

## Last SLA Inmate Cleared for Parole in Illinois

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — The last imprisoned member of the 1970s-era Symbionese Liberation Army has been cleared to serve his parole in Illinois after his release next month from a California prison, corrections officials said Tuesday. James Kilgore, 61, is completing a six-year sentence at High Desert State Prison in Susanville for his role in the murder of Myrna Opsahl, a mother of four who was killed during a 1975 bank robbery in Carmichael, a Sacramento suburb.

California corrections spokeswoman Terry Thornton said Illinois authorities have agreed to supervise Kilgore for a year. Federal authorities have approved his transfer to Illinois, where he will be supervised as part of a federal term he completed after being convicted of charges related to his years with the SLA and fleeing the country. Another SLA fugitive, Sara Jane Olson, was released from prison last month and allowed to return to her home in St. Paul, Minn. The Symbionese Liberation Army was a band of radicals from mostly middle-class backgrounds that sought to foment revolution and overthrow the government. Best known for the 1974 kidnapping of newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst, it claimed responsibility for assassinating Oakland Schools Superintendent Marcus Foster and was involved in a shootout with Los Angeles police officers that killed five SLA members.

He served his state prison term after completing a 4 1/2-year federal prison sentence for using a deceased baby's birth certificate to obtain a passport and for possession of a pipe bomb that federal authorities said they found in his Daly City apartment in 1975. The Los Angeles City Council approved a resolution Tuesday opposing Kilgore's out-of-state transfer. The Los Angeles Police Protective League and the National Association of Police Organizations, which objected to the transfer, lobbied California and Illinois officials to deny his request.



## On the politics of release

BY BELLICOSE KEMET

A few months ago, a comrade suggested I write an article on the phenomenon of captives who come into consciousness while in captivity, then drift back off to sleep soon after they hit the streets. She also asked if I knew "anyone who's made the successful transition to the outside, keeping their politics intact." Her question really challenged my memory and made me realize that I didn't know anyone personally who had touched down and stayed down for the cause.

I must also point out that I'm looking through a confined scope. I'm approaching my 14th year of imprisonment, all of which I've done in Wisconsin's maximum dungeons, except for the 27 months I spent in the state's supermax. For the most part, I've been around captives who are doing ridiculously extensive numbers, and the small remnant who've decided to awaken haven't really had the opportunity to test out their consciousness beyond these walls. There are short-timers who are sometimes shipped to max from one of the so-called camps (as the mediums and minims are referred to) because of some disciplinary incident. But they are usually too distracted by the prospect of release to focus – or find the need to focus – on studies that are relevant to the struggle. Few of them ever develop the desire and will to wake up, clean up, and stand up.

In Wisconsin, inmates overwhelmingly leave prison with deeply capitalistic ambitions, legal and illegal. I know several who have managed to stay out. I know, and knew, too many more who ended up either killed or recaptured. Their minds had been strictly on "getting dusk" (on getting money) and far away from battling this beast on a revolutionary level. To a certain extent, I understand their outlook; I once viewed things through the same narrow lens. Many of us have been socialized into reactionary thinking, lulled into believing in this American dream, fancying money as the cure-all to all our problems. This delusion breeds a deep-rooted shortsightedness that closes our minds to the broader struggle. It desensitizes us to the role we play in perpetuating our own social, political, economic, and educational bondage. It also provokes us to justify it and scorn "that black power shit" at a time when we, our family and community, are in the pits of powerlessness. This brings to mind something I read by Ms. Frances Cress Wellsing:

"If you conquer a people and oppress them, then you are forcing them to disrespect themselves. If you mistreat them, if you develop all kinds of negative images about them and project negative images about them, then you are teaching those people to hate themselves and to love that which is dominant. That is all a part of white supremacy. If I have been taught to hate myself, I won't defend myself.

No matter what is done to me, I will go along with the oppressor's agenda."

And not only do we go along with the oppressor's agenda, but we also foster it when we parrot his propagandas and ape his actions, especially the ones that militate against our collective survival and ultimate victory.

I'm not saying there's anything wrong with studying and working for personal (or family) financial security. It would be foolish not to. Poverty is a major part of oppression. However, it is also a mere symptom of an insidiously deadlier disease. Putting all the focus on eliminating the effects, while being neglectful in our fight against the underlying cause, is basically equivalent to prolonging death instead of doing what's needed to thwart it. As the late 2Pac said, "Currency means nothing if you still ain't free." Any one of us could get inducted into the real Billionaire Boy's Club tomorrow and still not attain freedom. To get rich or die tryin' is nonsense; to get free or die tryin' is good sense and should be common sense for people living under oppression. The gradual process of revolution begins with an awareness of the need for change within our thinking and within our conditions.

For the oppressed, the top priority must always be freedom for all: the uncut freedom to grow into our own, realize our highest potential and stretch our humanity to its furthest extremes. The presidential election of a black man seems to have left some thinking that the millennium has dawned in this country. I confess that I was moved by his win and all the hoopla that followed. But as I watched the jubilee, a disturbing curiosity surfaced in my consciousness. Suddenly I began to wonder how many of us were really teary-eyed and cheering because we felt that America had finally accepted us as a people. The thought sobered me. One thing that trumps race amongst most racists is their financial welfare. I doubt that Barack's victory is a testament to this country's embrace of black folks. It was more of a public repudiation of Bush's reckless greed and imperialistic stupidities, which left the lower and upper middle class sinking in economic quicksand.

The truth of the matter is that the same white supremacy-minded individuals remain in power within the alphabet agencies, from the CIA to the FBI, as well as the PDs and DOCs throughout this nation. Institutionalized racism is alive and kicking like karate. So the grassroots can't afford to shut up with demands for justice, nor let up in resistance to injustice. In fact, we all need to step it up like never before. History sheds light on the dark, schizophrenic nature of this beast and its mainstream media. It's quick to demonize what or who it once lionized ad nauseum. Barack Obama could very well become a victim of this American tradition. The foxes will eventually show their true colors and pounce; and the wolves are sharpening their teeth, preparing to bounce back with a right-wing vengeance. The struggle rages on, on all fronts, and the masses are called

ton, founder of the Black Panther Party, allegedly killed by a young Black Guerrilla Family adherent on August 22, 1989, during a dispute over "crack." Huey taught the Black masses socialism and popularized it through the slogan "Power to the People!" He armed the Black struggle and popularized it through the slogan "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." For that, and despite his human shortcomings, he was a true giant of the Black struggle, because his particular contribution is comparable to that of other modern-day giants, Marcus Garvey, Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King.

AIDS, crack, street crime, gang violence, homelessness, and arrest rates have all exploded throughout the Black colonies. The prison population on June 30, 1989, topped 673,000, an incredible 372,000 increase in less than a decade, causing the tripling and doubling of prison populations in 34 states, and sizable increases in most others. New York City prisons became so overcrowded they began using ships as jails. William Bennett, former U.S. Secretary of Education and so-called Drug Czar, announced plans to convert closed military bases into concentration camps.

The prison building spree and escalated imprisonment rates continue unabated. The new prisoners are younger, more volatile, have longer prison sentences, and are overwhelmingly of New African and Third World nationalities. It is estimated that by the year 1994 the U.S. will have over one million prisoners. Projections suggest that over 75 percent of them will be Black and other people of color. More are women than previously. Their percentage rose to 5 percent in 1980 from a low of 3 percent in 1970. Whites are arrested at about the same rate as in Western Europe while the New African arrest rate has surpassed that of Blacks in South Africa. In fact, the U.S. Black imprisonment rate is now the highest in the world. Ten times as many Blacks as whites are incarcerated per 100,000 population.

### THE '90S AND BEYOND

As we began to move through the '90s, the New African liberation struggle behind the walls found itself coalescing around campaigns to free political prisoners and prisoners

of war, helping to build a national PP/POW organization, strengthening its links on the domestic front, and building solidarity in the international area. 1991 brought the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. It freed many of the CIA's Eastern Europe personnel for redeployment back to American to focus on the domestic war against people of color. In the same manner that COINTELPRO perfected techniques developed in the infamous Palmer raids at the end of World War I and used them against Communist Party-USA, SCLC, NCC, BPP, NOI, RNA, and other domestic movements; repatriated CIA operatives used destabilization techniques developed in Eastern Europe, South Africa, Southeast Asia, etc., to wreak havoc in New African and other domestic communities of color today.

Although the established media concentrated on the sen-



The Update is a publication produced by the Anarchist Black Cross Federation. It is one of the few publications designed specifically for news/articles about and from political prisoners and prisoners of war in North America.

**The ABCf Update, Issue 52, Spring 2009 is now out!**

The present issue has updates on Malik Latine Transfers, Jaan Laaman Transfers, Byron Sahne Chubbuck Transfer, Eddie Hatcher Passes, Rob Robideau Passes, Texas Two Convicted, Robert Seth Hayes, Chicago ABC Moves, and Abel Paz Passes. With articles on Anarchists and the Good Time Bill, Sara Jane Olson Freed, James Kilgore Freed, Anarchist Dies in Explosion in Chile, Peter Gelder-loos Acquitted in Spain, Reflections on the Left by Joaquin Cienfuegos, RNC 8: Two Down, Two to Go, Ricardo Palmera, Open Letter to All Progressives by Jalil Muntagim, Letter From Sekou Kambui, Communication Management Units (CMU).

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## THE DECADE OF THE '80s

In June 1980 Ali Hassan was released after 16 years in the New Jersey state prisons. Two months later, five New World of Islam (NWI) members were arrested after a North Brunswick, New Jersey, bank robbery in a car with stolen plates. The car belonged to the recently released Ali Hassan, who had loaned it to a friend. Ali Hassan and 15 other NWI members refused to participate in the resulting mass trial which charged them in a Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organization (RICO) indictment with conspiracy to rob banks for the purpose of financing various NWI enterprises in the furtherance of creating an independent Black Nation. All defendants were convicted and sent behind the walls.

The '80s brought another round of BLA freedom fighters behind walls - Basheer Hameed and Abdul Majid in '80; Sekou Odinga, Kuwasi Balagoon, Chui Ferguson-Ei, Jamal Josephs again, Mutulu Shakur, and numerous BLA Multi-national Task Force supporters in '81; and Terry Khalid Long, Leroy Ojore Bunting, and others in '82. The government's sweep left Myrta Sudiata dead, Kuwasi Balagoon subsequently dead in prison from AIDS, and Sekou Odinga brutally tortured upon capture, torture that included pulling out his toenails and rupturing his pancreas during long sadistic beatings that left him hospitalized for six months. But this second round of captured BLA freedom fighters brought forth, perhaps for the first time, a battery of young, politically astute New African lawyers: NChokwe Lumumba, Jill Sofiyah Elijah, Nkechi Taifa, Adjoa Aiyetoro, Ashanti Chimurenga, Michael Tarif Warren, and others. They are not only skilled in representing New African POWs but the New African Independence Movement too, all of which added to the further development of the New African liberation struggle behind the walls.

The decade also brought behind the walls Mumia Abu-Jamal, the widely respected Philadelphia radio announcer, popularly known as the "Voice of the Voiceless." He maintained a steady drumbeat of radio support for MOVE prisoners. [While moonlighting as a taxi driver on the night of December 9, 1981, [he] discovered a policeman beating his younger brother. Mumia was shot and seriously wounded, the policeman was killed. Mumia now sits on death row in the greatest need of mass support from every sector, if he's to be saved from the state's electric chair.

Kazi Toure of the United Freedom Front (UFF) was sent behind the walls in 1982. He was released in 1991.

The New York 8 - Coltrane Chimurenga, Viola Plummer and her son Robert "R.T." Taylor, Roger Wareham, Omowale Clay, Lateefah Carter, Colette Pean, and Yvette Kelly were arrested on October 17, 1984, and charged with conspiring to commit prison breakouts and armed robberies, and to possess weapons and explosives. However the New York 8 was actually the New York 8+ because another

8 or 9 persons were jailed as grand Jury resisters in connection with the case. The New York 8 were acquitted on August 5, 1985.

That same year Ramona Africa joined other MOVE comrades already behind the walls. Her only crime was that she survived Philadelphia Mayor Goode's May 13, 1985, bombing which cremated 11 MOVE members, including their babies, families, home, and neighborhood.

The following year, November 19, 1986, a 20-year-old Bronx, New York, youth, Larry Davis, now Adam Abdul Hakeem, would make a dramatic escape during a shootout with police who had come to assassinate him for absconding with their drug-sales money. Several policemen were wounded in the shoot-out. Adam escaped unscathed but surrendered weeks later in the presence of the media, his family, and a mass of neighborhood supporters. After numerous charges, trials, and acquittals in which he exposed the existence of a New-York police-controlled drug ring that coerced Black and Puerto Rican youths to push police-supplied drugs, he was sent behind the walls on weapon possession convictions. Since incarceration, numerous beatings by guards have paralyzed him from the waist down and confined him to a wheelchair.

On July 16, 1987, Abdul Haqq Muhammad, Arthur Majied Barnes, and Robert "RT" Taylor, all members of the Black Men's Movement Against Crack, were pulled over by state troopers in upstate New York, arrested, and subsequently sent to prison on a variety of weapon possession convictions.

Herman Ferguson at 68 years old voluntarily returned to the U.S. on April 6, 1989, after 20-year's exile in Ghana, Afrika, and Guyana, South America. He had fled the U.S. during the late '60s after the appeal was denied on his sentence of 3 1/2 to 7 years following a conviction for conspiring to murder civil rights leaders. Upon return he was arrested at the airport and was moved constantly from prison to prison for several years as a form of harassment.

The '80s brought the Reagan era's rollback of progressive trends on a wide front and a steep rise in racist incidents, White vigilantism, and police murder of New African and Third World people. It also brought the rebirth and reestablishment of the NOI, a number of New African POWs adopting orthodox Islam in lieu of revolutionary nationalism, the New African People's Organization's (NAPO) and its chairman Chokwe Lumumba's emergence. From the RNA as banner carrier for the New African Independence Movement (NAIM), the New Orleans assassination of Lumumba Shakur of the Panther 21, and an upsurge in mass political demonstrations known as the "Days of Outrage" in New York City spearheaded by the December 12th Movement, and others.

The end of the decade brought the death of Huey P. New-

to confront the enemy (within and without) in any productive way possible.

As for the article that my comrade suggested I write, I consider this a rough draft. Actually, I would like to go a step farther and start a dialogue/discussion on the issue. There are some brothers who exit prison quoting Malcolm X and George Jackson, only to return one day sounding like some character out of a thugged-out urban novel. Trying to get them to open up about what caused their relapse usually proves futile because they often become too self-conscious about it. Sometimes they even grow hostile in their defense of falling back in league with the broken men. In this case, I move forward and let the dead bury their own. Once ignorance ceases to be an excuse, the responsibility falls squarely on our shoulders. Falling back to sleep is self-betrayal and treachery towards the folks (deceased and still living) who have invested in us.

This isn't a blanket indictment of all conscious captives who are released and later recaptured. Some brothers and sisters do go home with genuine intentions to stay out and stay down for the cause, but then run into unexpected obstacles. I understand the difficulties are real out in the world, particularly for someone fresh out of the joint with meager resources. It's no cakewalk; it's a rat race. Any of us could end up back behind these walls for any number of reasons, including ones that aren't totally our fault. I believe this needs to become a bigger aspect of our analysis. The best sources are the brothers and sisters who have gone through, or are going through, this fire.

I invite everyone who can offer insight on this subject and also advice on how to better prepare for and avoid those pitfalls. Topics of discussion:

1. What were some of the unexpected challenges that you, or someone that you know, have faced during the transition period and beyond?
2. What played the most important role in your/their setbacks and/or steps forward?
3. What hadn't you/they considered or better prepared for that you/they should have?
4. What are some things that could be set in place to better aid others who want to get out and get involved?

All of our voices are needed in this discussion. Any fruitful ideas, suggested reading material and methods are welcomed. I look forward to exploring this issue and collaborating on some possible solutions that'll better equip us to do what's needed to better prepare ourselves (and others) for all that awaits us once the prison gates open.

I'll close in the fervent spirit of peace and with the words of James Cone and Malcolm X, respectively:

"Freedom is not a gift but is a risk that must be taken. No one can tell us what liberation is and how we

ought to struggle for it, as if liberation can be found in words. Liberation is a process to be located and understood only in an oppressed community struggling for freedom."

"If you are not ready to die for it, put the word 'freedom' out of your vocabulary."

In Struggle and solidarity, Bellicose 'No Saint' Kemet

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## 'Heard 'Em Cry'

BY RODERICK BANKSTON

We are an historical people  
How can we not make history

Repeatedly

The slave narratives told by the grooms  
echo from antiquity  
up into the 21st century

The Invisibles given a visual  
enslaved in a strange land  
Our story is biblical  
gruesome & beautiful

The ballot or the bullet crucible  
That ultimatum's still crucial  
Mutual dreams deferred but never died

Another one finally realized  
In 2009 on election night  
Hear 'em cry: "Yes We Can!"

And my afro felt justified  
A legion of Black Martyrs  
Rose up

Stirred up the still waters  
creepin' thru my depths  
to testify to the meaning  
in their deaths

admonished me that it's still  
struggle left  
with Brotha Obama

be proud but expect mo' drama  
Beware of the snake charmers  
tighten a armor  
grow smarter

ray harder  
reach farther  
for enlightenment  
whenever it gets darker

come hell or high water!



# Revolutionaries – Keep It Real – Inside and Out

BY JAAN LAAMAN

Revolutionaries, freedom fighters, women and men down with the struggle for liberation and revolution are not defined by geography, or by their location or status in society. Being in captivity, being a prisoner, does, understandably, lead some people to a revolutionary consciousness. Once a higher political consciousness is achieved most people will become involved in some forms of liberation activities, depending on their conditions, time and place, and what their immediate needs and possibilities call for and allow.

All that said, it is true that many prisoners who become activists and revolutionaries behind the walls, fall off from revolutionary activities and consciousness when they get out, and all too often revert back to criminal and even anti-social behavior and practices. Sadly this is not a recent phenomenon; it is a problem that's been more and less around since modern revolutionary struggles developed back in the 1960s.

Bellucose Kemet's article is an insightful and timely representation of this problem and his call for some discussion is even more important. Asm welcomes and endorses Bellucose's call for a discussion. Prisoners, political prisoners, ex-prisoners, outside activists and organizations, we invite and encourage you all to take up this question now. Asm will continue an ongoing dialog by printing responses and letters in upcoming issues.

As a long time political prisoner (PP) and a life-long revolutionary, let me begin this dialog with some observations and ideas. PPs in the classic definition – those in prison for their political beliefs or political actions in support of their beliefs, have the experience of being politically conscious and active before being captured, then functioning as a PP inside, and many have had the experience of getting back out and continuing their revolutionary work on the streets.

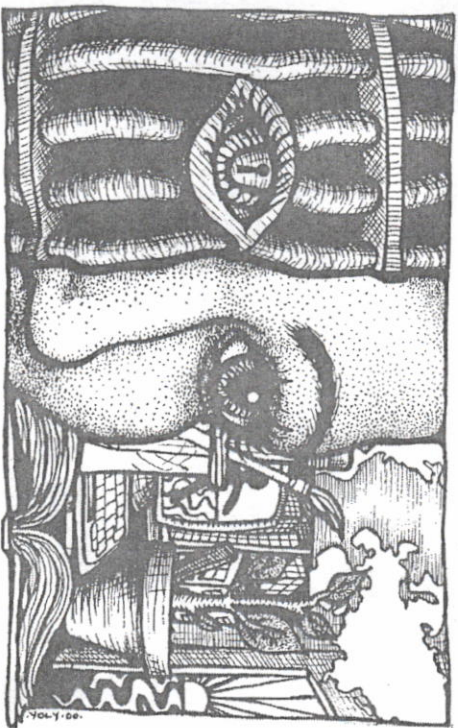
Political awareness and consciousness begins and grows inside each individual. It's on you, on each of us as individuals, to stay real and continue developing as a freedom fighter, no matter where you are, in prison, in seg, outside on parole, living and working in the community or living and working clandestinely. I have also seen solid conscious brothers survive years of

repression in prisons, including long seg time and even assaults by guards, and none of this weakened their understanding or resolve to fight for a more just, free and equal revolutionary future. Yet when some of these men were finally released they weakened, and you could say, gave up, at least for that period, and fell back into anti-social or self-destructive behavior. Like Bellucose said, they wound up back in prison or dead.

So how do good strong conscious brothers (and sisters, but I'm speaking mainly from my experience), who can and do put up with even vicious cop attacks behind the walls, get lost and weakened, sucked back into drugs and anti-social crime outside? Two general factors stand out. First, how solid and tight a network of activists or preferably a revolutionary organization will the released prisoner be going out to? Second, how realistically prepared is the released prisoner for the realities he or she is going to face outside?

Looking more closely at both of these factors, let's take the revolutionary prisoner's preparation first. How realistic is the person's idea and plan for activism outside? How solid is his/her plan for economic survival – living space, work, transportation, etc.? How solid is his/her plan for family responsibilities (children especially), and relationships? Family ties and particularly responsibility for our children is so important. Most released prisoners will have some issues and difficulties with their children and family, and this will take time, emotional energy and mature thinking to give your children the love and support they need, and to get balanced and right with your family overall. Understanding these types of things lie ahead when you are released, is important.

Very few ex-prisoners have any real money or much outside money support. This means being realistic about the time it takes to get yourself set up outside and not giving



women it has meant the control unit in the federal penitentiary at Anderson, West Virginia, or Lexington, Kentucky.

## Effect of Captured Freedom Fighters on Prisons

In 1988 political prisoners Silvia Baraldini, Alejandrina Torres, and Susan Rosenberg won a D.C. District Court lawsuit brought by attorneys Adjoa Aiyetoro, Jan Susler, and others. The legal victory temporarily halted the practice of sending prisoners to control units strictly because of their political status. The ruling was reversed by the D.C. Appellate Court a year later. Those political prisoners not sent to Marion, Alderman, or Lexington control units are sent to other control units modeled after Marion/Lexington but located within maximum security state prisons. Normally this means 23-hour-a-day lockdown in long-term units located in remote hinterlands far from family, friends, and attorneys, with heavy censorship and restrictions on communications, visits, and outside contacts, combined with constant harassment, provocation, and brutality by prison guards.

The influx of so many captured freedom fighters (i.e., prisoners of war - POWs) with varying degrees of guerrilla experience added a valuable dimension to the New African liberation struggle behind the walls. In the first place it accelerated the prison struggles already in process, particularly the attack on control units. One attack was spearheaded by Michael Deutsch and Jeffrey Haas of the People's Law Office, Chicago, which challenged Marion's HUAC boxcar cells. Another was spearheaded by Assata Shakur and the Center for Constitutional Rights which challenged her out-of-state placement in the Alderson, West Virginia, control unit.

Second, it stimulated a thoroughgoing investigation and exposure of COINTELPRO's hand in waging low intensity warfare on New African and Third World nationalities in the U.S. This was spearheaded by Geronimo ji-Jaga with Stuart Hanlon's law office in the West and by Dhoruba Bin-Wahad with attorneys Liz Fink, Robert Boyle, and Jonathan Lubell in the East. These COINTELPRO investigations resulted in the overturn of Bin-Wahad's conviction and his release from prison in March 1990 after he had been imprisoned 19 years for a crime he did not commit.

Third, it broadened the scope of the prison movement to the international arena by producing the initial presentation of the U.S. political prisoner and prisoner of war (PP/POW) issue before the UN's Human Rights Commission. This approach originated with Jalil Muntagim, and was spearheaded by him and attorney Kathryn Burke on the West Coast and by Sundiata Acoli and attorney Lemmox Hinds of the National Conference of Black Lawyers on the East Coast. This petition sought relief from human rights violations in U.S. prisons and subsequently asserted a colonized people's right to fight against alien domination and racist regimes as codified in the Geneva Convention.

Fourth, it intensified, clarified, and broke new ground on political issues and debates of particular concern to the New African community, i.e., the "National Question," spearheaded by Altha Shanna in the Midwest. All these struggles, plus those already in process, were carried out with the combination in one form or another of resolute prisoners, and community and legal support. Community support when present came from various sources - family, comrades, friends; political, student, religious, and prisoner rights groups; workers, professionals, and progressive newspapers and radio stations. Some of those involved over the years were or are: the National Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners, the Black Community News Service, the African Peoples Party, the Republic of New Africa, the African Peoples Socialist Party, The East, the Bliss Chord Communication Network, Liberation Book Store, WDAS Radio Philadelphia, WBSL Radio New York, Radio New York, Third World Newsnet, Libertad (political journal of the Puerto Rican Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional [MLN]), the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, the May 19th Communist Organization, the Madame Binh Graphics Collective, The Midnight Express, the Northwest Iowa Socialist Party, the National Black United Front, the Nation of Islam, Arm the Spirit, Black News, International Class Labor Defense, the Real Dragon Project, the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee, the National Prison Project, the House of the Lord Church, the American Friends Service Committee, attorneys Chuck Jones and Harold Ferguson of Rutgers Legal Clinic, the Jackson Advocate newspaper, Rutgers law students, the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown, the American Indian Movement, and others.

## The End of the '70s

As the decade wound down the late '70s saw the demise of the NOI following the death of Elijah Muhammad and the rise of orthodox Islam among significant segments of New Africans on both sides of the wall. By 1979 the prison population stood at 300,000, a whopping 100,000 increase within a single decade. The previous 100,000 increase, from 100,000 to 200,000, had taken 31 years, from 1927 to 1958. The initial increase to 100,000 had taken hundreds of years. Since America's original colonial times. The '60s were the transition decade of white flight that saw a significant decrease in both prison population and white prisoners. And since the total Black prison population increased only slightly or changed insignificantly over the decade of the insurgent '60s thru 1973, it indicates that New Africans are imprisoned least when they fight hardest.

The decade ended on a masterstroke by the B.L.A.'s Multinational Task Force, with the November 2, 1979, prison liberation of Assata Shakur - "Soul of the B.L.A." and pre-eminent political prisoner of the era. The Task Force then whisked her away to the safety of political asylum in Cuba where she remains to date.



war across the U.S. through highly mobile strike teams. The government's intensified search for the BLA during the early 1970s resulted in the capture of Geronimo ji Jaga in Dallas, Dhoruba Bin-Wahad and Jamal Josephs in New York, Sha Sha Brown and Blood McCreary in St. Louis, Nuh Washington and Jalil Muntaqim in Los Angeles, Herman Bell in New Orleans, Francisco and Gabriel Torres in New York, Russel Haroun Shoats in Philadelphia, Chango Monges, Mark Holder, and Kamau Hiltton in New York, Assata Shakur and Sundiata Acoli in New Jersey, Ashanti Alston, Tarik, and Walid in New Haven, Safiya Bukhari and Masai Gibson in Virginia, and others. Left dead during the government's search and destroy missions were Sandra Pratt (wife of Geronimo ji Jaga, assassinated while visibly pregnant), Mark Essex, Woodie Changa Green, Twyman Kakuyan Olugbala Meyers, Frank "Heavy" Fields, Anthony Kimu White, Zayd Shakur, Melvin Renna Kerney, Alfred Kambui Butler, Ron Carter, Rory Hithie, and John Thomas, among others. Red Adams, left paralyzed from the neck down by police bullets, would die from the effects a few years later.

Other New Afrikan freedom fighters attacked, wounded, and captured during the same general era were Imani Obadele and the RNA-11 in Jackson, Mississippi, Don Taylor and De Mau Mau of Chicago, Hanif Shabazz, Abdul Aziz, and the VI-5 in the Virgin Islands, Mark Cook of the George Jackson Brigade (GJB) in Seattle, Ahmed Obafemi of the RNA in Florida, Atiba Shan-na in Chicago, Mafundi Lake in Alabama, Sekou Kambui and Imani Harris in Alabama, Robert Aswad Duren in California, Kojo Bomani Sababu and Dharuba Cinque in Trenton, John Partee and Tommie Lee Hodges of Alkebulan in Memphis, Gary Tyler in Los Angeles, Kareem Saif Allah and the Five Percent-BLA-Islamic Brothers in New York, Ben Chavis and the Wilmington 10 in North Carolina, Delbert Africa and MOVE members in Philadelphia, and others doubtless too numerous to name.

### Political Converts in Prison

Not everyone was political before incarceration. John Andaliwa Clark became so, and a freedom fighter par excellence, only after being sent behind the walls. He paid the supreme sacrifice during a hail of gunfire from Trenton State Prison guards. Hugo Dahariki Pinell also became political after being sent behind the California walls in 1964. He has been in prison ever since. Joan Little took an ice pick from a white North Carolina guard who had used it to force her to perform oral sex on him. She killed him, escaped to New

York, was captured and forced to return to the same North Carolina camp where she feared for her life. Massive public vigilance and support enabled her to complete the sentence in relative safety and obtain her release.

Dessie Woods and Cheryl Todd, hitchhiking through Georgia, were given a ride by a white man who tried to rape them. Woods took his gun, killed him, and was sent to prison where officials drugged and brutalized her. Todd was also imprisoned and subsequently released upon completion of the sentence. Woods was denied parole several times then finally released.

Political or not, each arrest was met with highly sensationalized prejudicial publicity that continued unabated to and throughout the trial. The negative publicity blitz was designed to guarantee a conviction, smokescreen the real issues involved, and justify immediate placement in the harshest prison conditions possible. For men this usually means the federal penitentiary at Marion, Illinois. For



in to frustration, despair or foolishness. If we can survive economically in prison, where we literally earn pennies or quarters an hour, we can certainly survive and more outside, but it takes determination, some planning and a focus on what's really important.

Realistic plans for your political activism outside should begin while you are doing the bid. Reaching out, making contact with activists and revolutionary groups and people in the area you will be released to is important. Developing relationships, political discussions, and contributing to zines or newspapers in your years of captivity is important. Likewise maintaining contact with and getting advice from your comrades inside is important. With today's communication technology, even if the area you go out to doesn't have much activism, staying connected to other social activists online is useful. But you have to be wary of FBI stings, provocateurs and monitoring of activist and revolutionary sites online. Be creative and careful, but the point is to stay realistically connected to the struggle, with relationships and activity.

The second factor, the nature and strength of the outside group the released revolutionary prisoner is going out to work with, is a crucial matter. The ideal situation is that the released prisoner is already in contact with the activist organization in the area he or she is going to. The organization is ready to absorb the person, be a base of political and social support, and the ex-prisoner takes up the work the group is doing. Even then, we need to be aware that reaching out to society from long prison years has its difficulties, but being in a functioning revolutionary group make this more manageable for the ex-prisoner.

Historically a period of successful transitions of revolutionary prisoners to outside activism happened in the 1970s, and most of all with the Black Panther Party - (BPP). In those years many max prisons had inside BPP collectives and even some chapters, or at the least fraternal collectives of Black Nationalist prisoners. Released brothers went right out to the local BPP Chapter in the city they were paroled or maxed out to. The Young Lords Party, the Brown Berets organization and some other more local organizations like the Young Patriots and Rising Up Angry in Chicago, Cold Steel in Buffalo, the Prisoners Union in California, provided a similar transition for released revolutionaries - Latino, Black and white. Also the American Indian Movement - AIM, was absorbing Native men and women as they were released.

This was a period when activism and revolutionary consciousness was more widespread, including behind the walls in most prisons across the country. The present period has its own pluses and negatives. While most of the organizations named above are no longer around, political activism and revolutionary groups and activity is a reality in at least most of the major cities and areas of this country. Within prisons, especially newer penitentiaries, the level of

control and manipulation of prisoners, as well as old fashion repression is greater than decades ago. But repression continues to breed resistance, and revolutionary consciousness likewise continues to exist among individuals and of-ten on a collective level behind the walls.

Prisoners need to be more aware of groups like the ABC (Anarchist Black Cross) which have chapters in cities around the u.s., and who do a lot of work supporting prisoners and prison struggle.

The long existing socialist parties and their publications: Workers World, Workers Vanguard, Freedom Socialist, "R", and others, all have branches in many u.s. cities. These are all possible places for released revolutionary prisoners to connect to and build with.

On the local level, every city has community and city wide formations working with youth, gangs, against police brutality, anti-war and environmental struggles and more. All these are possible avenues and areas where the released prisoner could and should be connecting to and working and building with. After a period of involvement with such people and groups, you might realize that more is necessary and the idea of forming a new and more specific organization in your neighborhood or city might be what is called for. Really, the possibilities for revolutionary activity, organizing and struggle are limitless.

Outside revolutionary and activist organizations should give more thought and effort to working with conscious prisoners and connecting with them when they get released. There are 2 1/2 million people behind bars in the u.s. today and many hundreds of thousands are released every year. A small percentage of these men and women hit the streets with revolutionary consciousness and some experience dealing with the rawest aspect of u.s. imperialism here inside America - life in prison. They are assets to the Freedom Struggle and could be dynamic activists in your group. I am not suggesting that revolutionary organizations become social service groups dealing with the housing and work needs of released prisoners. I am saying there are "Malcolm X's", "Assata Shakur's" and "George Jackson's" in the ranks of America's prison population today, and some of these released comrades could be valuable members of your work and group.

Prisoners who have become revolutionaries need to keep it real through all the changes, whether you get thrown in seg, or get released to the streets. Activists and revolutionaries in formations outside should recognize and support the struggles of prisoners and prison revolutionaries, and continue to work with them once they are released.

On this note, I look forward to much more discussion on this whole question from both sides of the prison walls. Communicate To Educate - Educate to Liberate!



# Resistance: The Origin Of Black August

BY THE MALCOLM X GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT  
and posted on [www.assatahakur.org](http://www.assatahakur.org)

Black August originated in the California penal system to honor fallen Freedom Fighters, Jonathan Jackson, George Jackson, William Christmas, James McClain and Khatri Gaudin. Jonathan Jackson was gunned down outside the Marin County California courthouse on August 7, 1970 as he attempted to liberate three imprisoned Black Liberation Fighters: James McClain, William Christmas and Ruchell Magee. Ruchell Magee is the sole survivor of that armed liberation attempt. He is the former co-defendant of Angela Davis and has been locked down for 38 years, most of it in solitary confinement. George Jackson was assassinated by prison guards during a Black prison rebellion at San Quentin on August 21, 1971. Three prison guards were also killed during that rebellion and prison officials charged six Black and Latino prisoners with the death of those guards. These six brothers became known as the San Quentin Six.

Khatri Gaudin was a prominent leader of the Black Guerrilla Family (BGF) after Comrade George was assassinated. Khatri was a leading force in the formation of Black August, particularly its historical and ideological foundations. Khatri, like many of the unnamed freedom fighters of the BGF and the revolutionary prison movement of the 1970s, was murdered at San Quentin Prison in 1978 to eliminate his leadership and destroy the resistance movement.

The brothers who participated in the collective founding of Black August wore black armbands on their left arm and studied revolutionary works, focusing on the works of George Jackson. The brothers did not listen to the radio or watch television in August. Additionally, they didn't eat or drink anything from sun-up to sundown; and loud and boastful behavior was not allowed. The brothers did not support the prison's canteen. The use of drugs and alcoholic beverages was prohibited and the brothers held daily exercises, because during Black August, emphasis is placed on sacrifice, fortitude and discipline. Black August is a time to embrace the principles of unity, self-sacrifice, political education, physical training and resistance.

In the late 1970s the observance and practice of Black August left the prisons of California and began being practiced by Black/New African revolutionaries throughout the country. Members of the New African Independence Movement (NAIM) began practicing and spreading Black August during this period. The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM) inherited knowledge and practice of Black August from its parent organization, the New African People's Organization (NAPO). MXGM through the

Black August Collective (now defunct) began introducing the Hip-Hop community to Black August in the late 1990s after being inspired by New African political exile Nehanda Abiodun.

Traditionally, Black August is a time to study history, particularly our history in the North American Empire. The first Africans were brought to Jamestown as slaves in August of 1619, so August is a month during which Blacks/New Africans can reflect on our current situation and our self-determining rights. Many have done that in their respective time periods. In 1843, Henry Highland Garnett called a general slave strike on August 22. The Underground Railroad was started on August 2, 1850. The March on Washington occurred in August of 1963, Gabriel Prosser's 1800 slave rebellion occurred on August 30 and Nat Turner planned and executed a slave rebellion that commenced on August 21, 1831. The Watts rebellions were in August of 1965. On August 18, 1971 the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (RNA) was raided by Mississippi police and FBI agents.

The MOVE family was bombed by Philadelphia police on August 8, 1978. Further, August is a time of birth. Dr. Mutulu Shakur (political prisoner & prisoner of war), Pan-Africanist Black Nationalist Leader Marcus Garvey, Marion Russell Shoatz (political prisoner) and Chicago BPP Chairman Fred Hampton were born in August. August is also a time of rebirth, W.E.B. Dubois died in Ghana on August 27, 1963.

The tradition of fasting during Black August teaches self-discipline. A conscious fast is in effect from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. Some other personal sacrifice can be made as well. The sundown meal is traditionally shared whenever possible among comrades. On August 31, a People's feast is held and the fast is broken. Black August fasting should serve as a constant reminder of the conditions our people have faced and still confront. Fasting is uncomfortable at times, but it is helpful to remember all those who have come and gone before us, Ni Nkan Mase, if we stand tall, it is because we stand on the shoulders of many ancestors.

*MXGM would like to thank the following for their contribution to this article: Kali Akuno, Kiliu Nyasha, Ayanna Mashama, David Giappa Johnson, Sundiata Tate, Louis Bato Talamantez of the San Quentin 6 and The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM).*

In addition to being observed by many prisoners across North America, Black August study groups and events are planned in 2009 in Toronto, Canada and in Austin, Texas. In Austin local organizers will also study Chicano history and hold an event in support of political prisoner Alvaro Luna Hernandez. 4sm will report on these Black August activities in Issue 14 - send us your reports too!

California prisons. Those disaffected centered around Peabody at Old Folsom prison who took parts from the BL and the BGF constitutions are created a new United Blood Nation (UBN) Constitution designed to unify all Bloods in prison. Since then, Bloods have chosen which constitution they would come under

Blood member under either the BL or UBN Constitution held to a higher standard than other members; they hold positions and are similar to the Officer's Corp of a military organization. Those Bloods not under a constitution are the foot soldiers. The BL and UBN organization spread throughout the California prison system, and are strictly prison organizations. Once a Blood leaves prison he returns to his old neighborhood set. From South Central, the Bloods spread to Pasadena, Gardena, San Diego, Sacramento, Bakersfield, and throughout the state and its prison system.

## California Bay Area Gangs

San Francisco's Bay Area gangs or "clicks" can be traced back to the early 1960s and are usually identified by, or named after, their neighborhoods or communities. Most of those functioning today came from splinter groups of the BPP after it broke up.

In Oakland, the 69th Street Mob, founded by Felix Mitchell in the early 1970s, still exists despite the government's best efforts to derail it. In East Oakland the Rolling 20s and the 700 Club, along with the Acom Gang in West Oakland, are the powerhouse clicks on the streets.

In San Francisco, there is Sunnydale and Hunters Point, the city's largest street gang which is divided into several clicks - Oakdale, Harbor Road, West Point, etc. East Palo Alto is the home of the Professional Low Riders (PLR) who are a major influence in the South Bay Area - and in Vallejo there is the North Bay Gangsters and Crestview.

Most Bay Area gangs don't have colors but align primarily on the basis of money and hustling endeavors. Many are associated with the Rap music industry and with various prison groups - the 415s, BGF or ANSARs.

## Growth of the Gangster Disciples

In 1970, Gangster Discipline (GD) Larry Hoover was convicted for a gang related murder and sentenced to a 150 to 200 year state sentence. He's the current leader of the GD's and runs the syndicate from an Illinois prison cell.

As drugs flooded into the Chicago ghettos, young black men flooded into the Illinois prisons where they were given GD application forms to fill out. If their references roved solid, they were indoctrinated into the gang. Everyone who joined had to memorize the GD's 16 rule code. The GD's spread throughout the Illinois and Midwest prison systems.

The flow of GDs back into the streets enabled them expand their street network which is an intricate command and control structure, similar to a military organization. Comrade George Assassinated

On August 21, a guard shot and killed George Jackson as he bolted from a control unit and ran for the San Quentin wall. Inside the unit lay three guards and two trustees dead. The circumstances surrounding George Jackson's legendary life and death, and the astuteness of his published writings left a legacy that inspires and instructs the New African liberation struggle on both sides of the wall even today, and will for years to come. September 13, 1971, became the bloodiest day in U.S. prison history when New York's Governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered the retaking of Attica prison. The previous several years had seen a number of prison rebellions flare up across the country as prisoners protested widespread maltreatment and inhumane conditions. Most had been settled peaceably with little or no loss of human life after face-to-face negotiation between prisoners and state and prison officials. At Attica black, brown, white, red, and yellow prisoners took over one block of the prison and stood together for five days seeking to negotiate an end to their inhumane conditions. Their now-famous dictum declared "We are men, not beasts, and will not be driven as such." But Rockefeller had presidential ambitions. The rebelling prisoners' demands included a political request for asylum in a nonimperialistic country. Rockefeller's refusal to negotiate foreshadowed a macabre replay of his father John D's slaughter of striking Colorado miners and their families decades earlier. Altogether 43 people died at Attica. New York State trooper bullets killed 39 people, 29 prisoners and 10 guards in retaking Attica and shocked the world by the naked barbarity of the U.S. prison system. Yet the Attica rebellion too remains a milestone in the development of the New African liberation struggle behind the walls, and a symbol of the highest development of prisoner multinational solidarity to date.

## New World Clashes With the Nation of Islam

In 1973 the simmering struggle for control of Newark's NOI Temple No. 25 erupted into the open. Warren Marcella, a New World member, assassinated NOI Temple No. 25 Minister Shabazz. In retaliation several NWI members were attacked and killed within the confines of the New Jersey prison system, and before the year was out the bodies of Marcella and a companion were found beheaded in Newark's Weequahic Park. Ali Hassan, still in prison, was tried as one of the coconspirators in the death of Shabazz and was found innocent.

## The Black Liberation Army

COINTELPRO's destruction of the BPP forced many members underground and gave rise to the Black Liberation Army (BLA) - a New African guerrilla organization. The BLA continued the struggle by waging urban guerrilla



due to its own internal contradictions and subsequently the weight of the state. Confusion set in among the people creating, if you will, a window of opportunity of which both the criminals and the counter revolutionists in the government took advantage.

Community Relations for an Independent People (CRIP) was a city funded team post (meeting place) on the east side of L.A. that played host to some of the area's most rowdy youth. One such brother was Raymond Washington, who at the time belonged to a young upstart club called the Baby Avengers. The team post became center ground to an ever widening group of youth who eventually took its title, CRIP, as a name and moved westward with it. With the vanguard in shambles and the local pigs turning a deliberate deaf ear, the CRIPs flourished rapidly. In its formative years, the Party's influence was evident. For the same uniform/dress code of the Party's was that of the CRIPs. Yet, a sinister twist developed where as New Afrikan people were targets of the young hoodlums. And with no vanguard forces readily available to teach and train these youth, they spiraled out of control, taking as their nemesis the Brims who later developed into the city wide Bloods. The founding of the CRIPs is established as 1969. Their gang color is blue, and sometimes also the color white.

#### ENTER THE '70s

A California guard, rated as an expert marksman, opened the decade of the '70s with the January 13th shooting at close range of W.L. Nolen, Cleveland Edwards, and Alvin "Jug" Miller in the Soledad prison yard. They were left lying where they fell until it was too late for them to be saved by medical treatment. Nolen, in particular, had been instrumental in organizing protest of guard killings of two other Black prisoners — Clarence Causey and William Powell — at Soledad in the recent past, and was consequently both a thorn in the side of prison officials and a hero to the Black prison populations. When the guard was exonerated of the triple killings two weeks later by a Board of Inquiry, the prisoners retaliated by throwing a guard of the tier.

George Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo, and John Cluchette were charged with the guards death and came to be known as the Soledad Brother. California Black prisoners solidified around the Soledad Brother case and the chain of events led to the formation of the Black Guerrilla Family (BGF). The Panthers spearheaded a massive campaign to save the Soledad Brothers from the gas chamber. The nationwide coalescence of prisoners and support groups around the case converted the scattered, disparate prison struggles into a national prison movement.

On August 7, 1970, Jonathan Jackson, younger brother of George, attempted to liberate Ruchell Cinque Magee, William Christmas, and James McClain from the Marin County courthouse in California. Jonathan, McClain, Christmas, and the trial judge were killed by SWAT teams who also wounded the prosecutor and paralyzed him for life. Mi-

## Black August: A Celebration of Freedom Fighters

BY DOC HOLIDAY ET AL.

Black August originated in the California penal system in the 1970s. Many significant events in the New African Nation's struggle for justice and liberation have occurred in August. The commemoration of Black August particularly hails the advances and sacrifices of Black Freedom Fighters.

Following are several pages of authentic information on Black August provided by Doc Holiday, an original comrade of George Jackson and a longtime figure in the Black Liberation and prison struggle. Doc is presently in prison in Marion, Illinois.

#### History of Black August Concept and Program

The month of August gained special significance and importance in the Black Liberation Movement beginning with a courageous attempt by Jonathan Jackson to demand the freedom of political prisoners/prisoners of war which the Soledad Brothers' case were the center of attention.

On August 7, 1970 Jonathan Jackson, William Christmas, James McClain, and Ruchell Magee were gunned down at the Marin County Courthouse Uprising in Attica prison, 1971 in that attempt for freedom. Ruchell Cinque Magee remains the sole survivor of that bid for liberation, he also remains a POW at Folsom prison doing life. Though this rebellion was put down by gory pigs and their agents it was internalized within the hearts and minds of the people on the outside in the larger prison as well as those in the concentration camps (prison), internalized in the same fashion as we honor other heroic African Freedom Fighters, who sacrificed their lives for the people and the liberation.

On August 21, 1971, almost exactly a year following the slave rebellion at Marin County Courthouse, George L. Jackson (older brother of Jonathan Jackson as well as one of the Soledad Brothers) whose freedom was the primary demand of the Marin rebellion, was assassinated at San Quentin prison in an alleged escape put forth by prison administration and the state to cover its conspiracy. Comrade George Jackson was a highly respected and purposely influential leader in the Revolutionary Prison Movement. Jackson was also very popular beyond prison, not only because he was a Soledad Brother, but also because of the book he authored appropriately entitled "Soledad Brother." This book not only revealed to the public the inhumane and degrading conditions in prison, he more importantly, correctly pointed to the real cause of those effects in prison as

well as in society, a decadent Capitalist system that breeds off racism and oppression.

On August 1, 1978 brother Jeffery "Khatari" Gualden, a Black Freedom Fighter and Prisoner of War, captured within the walls of San Quentin was a victim of a blatant assassination by capitalist-corporate medical politics. Khatari was another popular and influential leader in the Revolutionary Prison Movement.

An important note must be added here and that is, the Black August Concept and Movement that it is part of and helping to build is not limited to our sisters and brothers that are currently captured in the various prison Kamps throughout California. Yet without a doubt it is inclusive of these sisters and brothers and moving toward a better understanding of the nature and relationship of prison to oppressed and colonized people.

So it should be clearly understood that Black August is a reflection and commemoration of history; of those heroic partisans and leaders that realistically made it possible for us to survive and advance to our present level of liberation struggle. People such as: Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Gabriel Prosser, Frederick Douglass, W.E. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Paul Robeson, Rosa Parks, M.L. King, Malcolm X, and numerous others in our more contemporary period. It must be further clarified that when we speak of "Culture Development," we are not advocating Cultural Nationalism and/or merely talking about adopting African names jewellery, dashikis, etc. Our primary interest lies not only in where we came from, but the nature of "WHY" we were forcefully brought here, understanding the character of "CONTINUOUS" struggle with the recognition that it is a protracted struggle and developing the necessary lifestyles to guarantee its success.

**August 20, 1619:** First born African captives were brought to England's North American colony of Jamestown, Virginia.

**August 16, 1768:** Charleston, South Carolina rebellious African slaves (known as maroons) engaged British military forces in bloody battle defending their camp which was a haven for fugitive slaves.

**August 30, 1800:** Day set for launching Gabriel Prossers revolt. On this day over 1000 armed slaves gathered to endeavor to secure their liberty, however bad weather forced them to postpone the revolt and betrayal ultimately led to the crushing of their physical force.

**August 21, 1831:** Slave revolt launched under the leadership of Nat Turner which lasted four days and resulted in fifty-one slaveholders and their loved ones being subjected to revolutionary People's justice.



**August 29, 1841:** Street skirmish took place in Cincinnati between African and Euro-American, wherein for five days Africans waged valiant struggle in defense of their women, children and property against brutal racist terror campaigns.

**August 1854:** Delegates from eleven states met in Cleveland at the National Emigration Convention of the Colored People, to advance the position that an independent land base (nation) be set up for the absorption of captive Africans in Babylon who wanted to return to Africa.

**August 1, 1856:** North Carolina, fierce battle erupted between fugitive slaves and slaveholders who sought their capture and re-enslavement. Only recorded casualties was among slaveholders.

**August 1860:** Freedom (slave) conspiracy uncovered with the discovery of an organized camp of Africans and Euro-American co-conspirators in Talladega County, Alabama.

**August 2, 1865:** Virginia a statewide conference of fifty African delegates met to demand that Africans in Virginia be granted legal title to land occupied during the Civil War. Numerous off-pitch battles ensued during this same month as terrorist mobs moved to evict Africans from the land and were met with resistance.

**August 17, 1887:** Honorable Marcus Garvey, father of contemporary African Nationalism was born.

**August 1906:** African soldiers (in service of Babylon) enraged behind racial slurs and discrimination struck out and wrecked the town of Brownville, Texas.

**August 1906:** Niagara Movement met at Harpers Ferry, Virginia and issued W.E. Marcus Garvey Dubois' historic manifesto against racist discrimination in Babylon against Africans.

**August 1, 1914:** Garvey founds Universal Negro Improvement Association, advancing the call for Land, Freedom, and Independence for African people.

**August 23, 1917:** African soldiers in Huston engaged in street skirmishes that left more than seventeen Euro-American racists dead.

**August 1920:** Over two thousand delegates representing African from the four corners of the earth gathered in New York for the International Convention of the Negro People of the World, sponsored by UNIA convention issue a bill of rights for Africans.

**August 1943:** Slave revolt took place in Harlem as result of a K-9 shooting a brother defending the honor of African womanhood. More than 16,000 military and police personnel was required to quell the rebellion.

**August 1963:** 190,000 Africans (250,000 people all told) took part in the March on Washington led by Dr. Martin Luther King to petition for the extension of the rights and privileges due to them mandated by the U.S. Constitution.

**August 1964—**African launched comparatively large-scale urban slave revolt in the following cities: Jersey City NY, Paterson NJ, Kearsburg NJ, Chicago IL, and Philadelphia PA. These slave revolts were for the most part sparked by either police brutality or disrespect shown toward African womanhood.

**August 16, 1965:** Urban revolt took place in Northern Philadelphia.

**August 7-8, 1966:** Large-scale urban revolt was launched in Lansing, Michigan.

**August 28, 1966:** Waukegan, Illinois, urban slave revolt launched in response to police brutality.

**July 30-August 2, 1967:** Urban slave revolt launched in Milwaukee.

**August 19-24, 1967:** Comparatively large-scale urban slave revolt was launched in New Haven, Connecticut.

**August 7, 1970:** Jonathan Jackson killed in firefight while leading the Marin County Courthouse raid.

**August 21, 1971:** George Jackson shot and killed in San Quentin by tower guards.

### Black August Program

Most standard history books tend to either play down or ignore New African resistance as a factor in the destruction in the slave economy. On the other hand, when one understands New Africans are still an oppressed nation, the reason for such deception becomes clear. Black August contends that not only was such resistance a factor in the destruction of the slave economy, but New African resistance to slavery continues to inspire New African resistance to national oppression. Herbert Aptheker (the author of "American Negro Slave Revolts") recounts the personal remark of one New African involved in the civil rights struggle:

"From personal experience I can testify that American Negro Slave Revolts made a tremendous impact on those of us in the civil rights and Black Liberation movement. It was the single most effective antidote to the poisonous ideals that blacks had not a history of struggle or that such struggle took the form of non-violent protest. Understanding people like Denmark Vessey, Nat Turner, William Lloyd Garrison etc. provided us with that link to our past that few ever thought existed."

to roll back draconian prison policies that had stood for centuries and to further the development of the New African liberation struggle behind the walls.

These struggles would not have been as successful, or would have been much more costly in terms of lives lost or brutality endured, had it not been for the links to the community and the community support and legal support that political prisoners brought with them into the prisons. Although that support was not always sufficient in quantity or quality, or was sometimes nonexistent or came with hidden agendas, or was marked by frequent conflicts, on the whole it was this combination of resolute prisoners, community support, and legal support which was most often successful in prison struggles.

### The Changing Complexion of Prisons

As the '60s drew to a close New African and Third World nationalities made up nearly 50 percent of the prison population. National liberation consciousness became the dominant influence behind the walls as the overall complexion neared the changeover from White to Black, Brown, and Red. The decade long general decrease in prisoners, particularly Whites, brought a drop of between 16,000 and 23,000 while the total number of New African prisoners increased slightly or changed insignificantly over the same period. Yet the next decade would begin the period of unprecedented new prison construction, as the primary role of U.S. prisons changed from "suppression of the working classes" to suppression of domestic Black and Third World liberation struggles inside the U.S.

### Origin of Crip

There existed street organizations in South Central, Los Angeles, before the rise of the Black Panther Party. These groups, criminal in essence, were indeed the wells from which the Panthers would recruit their most stalwart members. Alperntice "Bunchy" Carter, who chartered the first L.A. Chapter of the Party was the leader of perhaps the most violent street organizations of that time — The Slansons, James Carr, former cell mate of Comrade George Jackson, and author of BAD, was a member of the Farmers. There were the Gladiators, the Businessmen, the Avenges, Blood Alley, and the Rebel Rousers to name but a few.

After the 1965 rebellion in Watts, there came an unsteady truce of sorts that caused the street organizations to focus on a larger, more deadly enemy. — The Los Angeles Police Department. So, by the time the Black Panther Party came to L.A., in 1968, a shaky peace existed among the direction in which the vent their anger, respond to injustice and represent their neighborhoods.

By and large, the Party usurped the youthful rage and brought the street organizations of that time to an end. Of

course, the U.S. government also did its share by drafting young brothers into the Vietnam War.

These, however, were the storm years of COINTELPRO and the Party was the focal point. Thus, by late '69, the above ground infrastructure of the BPP was in shambles

## Vernal Equinox 2009

BY AIN

Sam Cooke once sang  
"It's been a long time coming  
Bu I know a change is gonna come"

the journey through this night has been long and dark, but the forces of darkness are receding, a tipping point has been reached there is light on the horizon a righteous path ahead visible once again yet the long night is not yet over, still pretty dark and gray things are cracked and broken... in disarray on one side, astonishingly even now, are those who hatefully appeal to our worst and advocate a Rush to failure

on the other sings Leonard Cohen  
"there's a crack in everything  
that's how the light gets in"

as the hour of the wolf passes and light begins to get in... we can see, we children of the light we children of the sun of the stars, we can see we truly are every... living... thing, on this beautiful blue marble whipping around the sun light feeding our vision, our understanding, our compassion, our growth... and our love

at this auspicious and challenging time may we recognize ourselves once again in each other... in everything, and see that we truly are one and bring the light, or as the Buddha said, "make of yourself a light."

and so as the sun returns, may we be part of the turning may the light wrap its loving arms around us maybe we begin once again, albeit with a long hard road ahead as the smoke clears in this hope-filled rooms



## Origin of the Gangster Disciples Street Gang

The Gangster Disciples were founded in the 1960s in Chicago under the name "Black Disciples" by the late David Barksdale, known historically in gang circles as Kind David. The group's name was later changed to "Black Gangster Disciples" and later still the name was shortened to "Gangster Disciples," or simply as "G.D." Its gang colors are blue and black.

## COINTELPRO Attacks

In 1969 COINTELPRO launched its main attack on the Black Liberation Movement in earnest. It began with the mass arrest of Lumumba Shakur and the New York Panther 21. It followed with a series of military raids on Black Panther Party offices in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Haven, Jersey City, Detroit, Chicago, Denver, Omaha, Sacramento, and San Diego, and was capped off with an early morning 4 hour siege that poured thousands of rounds into the Los Angeles BPP office. By mid morning, hundreds of angry Black residents gathered at the scene and demanded that the police cease fire. Fortunately Geronimo ji-Jaga, decorated Vietnam vet, had earlier fortified the office to withstand an assault, and no Panthers were seriously injured. However, repercussions from the outcome eventually drove him underground. The widespread attacks left Panthers dead all across the country - Fred Hampton, Mark Clark, Bunchy Carter, John Higgins, John Savage, Walter Toure Pope, Bobby Hutton, Sylvester Bell, Frank "Capt. Franco" Diggs, Fred Bennett, James Carr, Larry Robeson, John Savage, Spurgeon "Jake" Winters, Alex Rackley, Arthur Morris, Steve Bartholemew, Robert Lawrence, Tommy Lewis, Nathaniel Clark, Welton Armstead, Sidney Miller, Sterling Jones, Babatunde Omawali, Sameul Napier, Harold Ruggle, and Robert Webb among others. In the three years after J. Edgar Hoover's infamous COINTELPRO memorandum, members of the BPP were killed, nearly a thousand were arrested, and key leaders were sent to jail. Others were driven underground. Still others, like BPP field marshal Donald "D.C." Cox, were driven into exile overseas.

The RNA was similarly attacked that year. During their second annual convention in March '69, held at Reverend C.L. Franklin's New Bethel Church in Detroit, a police provocation sparked a siege that poured 800 rounds into the church. Several convention members were wounded; one policeman was killed, another wounded, and the entire convention, 140 people, was arrested en masse. When Reverend Franklin (father of "The Queen of Soul" singer Aretha Franklin) and Black State Representative James Del Rio were informed of the incident they called Black Judge George Crockett, who proceeded to the police station where he found total legal chaos. Almost 150 people were being held incommunicado. They were being questioned, finger printed, and given nitrate tests to determine if they had fired guns, in total disregard of fundamental

constitutional procedures. Hours after the roundup, there wasn't so much as a list of persons being held and no one had been formally arrested. An indignant Judge Crockett set up court right in the station house and demanded that the police either press charges or release their captives. He had handled about fifty cases when the Wayne County prosecutor, called in by the police, intervened. The prosecutor promised that the use of all irregular methods would be halted. Crockett adjourned the impromptu court, and by noon the following day the police had released all but a few individuals who were held on specific charges. Chaka Fuller, Rafael Viera, and Alfred 2X Hibbits were charged with the killing. All three were subsequently tried and acquitted. Chaka Fuller was mysteriously assassinated a few months afterwards.

On Friday the 13th of June 1969, Clarence 13X, founder of The Five Percenters was mysteriously assassinated in the elevator of a Harlem project building by three male Negroes. His killers were never discovered but his adherents suspect government complicity in his death. News reports at the time hinted that BOSS instigated the assassination to try to ferment a war between the NOI and The Five Percenters.

Revolutionaries nationwide were attacked and/or arrested - Tyari Uhuru, Maka, Askufo, and the Smyrna Brothers in Delaware, Jofo Muhammad Bowers and Fred Burton in Philadelphia, and Panthers Mondo Langa, Ed Poindexter, and Veronza Daoud Bowers, Jr., in Omaha.

Police mounted an assault on the Panther office in the Desiree Projects of New Orleans which resulted in several arrests. A similar attack was made on the Peoples Party office in Houston. One of their leaders, Carl Hampton, was killed by the police and another, Lee Otis Johnson, was arrested later on an unrelated charge and sentenced to 41 years in prison for alleged possession of one marijuana cigarette.

## The Rise of Prison Struggles

Like the Panthers, most of those arrested brought their philosophies with them into the prisons. Likewise, most had outside support committees to one degree or another so that this influx of political prisoners linked the struggle behind the walls with the struggles in the outside local communities. The combination set off a beehive of political activity behind the walls, and prisoners stepped up their struggle for political, African, Islamic, and academic studies, access to political literature, community access to prisons, an end to arbitrary punishments, access to attorneys, adequate law libraries, relevant vocational training, contact visits, better food, health care, housing, and a myriad of other struggles. The forms of prison struggle ranged from face-to-face negotiations to mass petitioning, letter writing and call-in campaigns, outside demonstrations, class action, law suits, hunger strikes, work strikes, rebellions, and more drastic actions. Overall, all forms of struggle served

Black August contends that from the very inception of slavery, New Africans huddled illegally to commemorate and draw strength from New African slaves who met their death resisting. Black August asserts that it is only natural for each generation of New Africans faced with the task to liberate the nation, to draw strength and encouragement from each generation of New African warriors that preceded them. It is from such a rich heritage of resistance that Black August developed, committed to continuing the legacy of resistance, vowing to respond to the destruction of colonial oppression with our George Jacksons, Malcolm X's, and Fred Hamptons etc.

New African resistance moved decisively into the 1920s and 1930s. Evidence of this was movements like: The African Blood Brothers, The Share Croppers, The Black Bolsheviks, etc. Unduly there is an incorrect tendency to confine the discussion of African Nationalism to the well-known Garvey movement as the sole manifestation of national consciousness. The Garvey movement was the point of the emerging politics of New African resistance.

In labor, national consciousness, (i.e. literature, jazz, art, etc.) in the struggle for the land, in all areas of politics, like a great explosion of previously pent-up National Consciousness took place among New Africans.

The sixties was a further example of New African resistance to national oppression. It should be emphasized here that that struggle of non-violence was at that time a strategy of illegality, of danger, of arousing New Africans to direct confrontation with the colonial oppressor. Whether it was a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter or bus station, the movement deliberately broke the colonial law.

Inevitably the anti-colonial struggle moved to a higher level, growing beyond the initial stage of non-violent civil rights protest. Non-violent civil rights strategy was tried and discarded by New Africans, who found that it was a failure, incapable of forcing an entrenched settler's colonial regime to change.

Black August purports that it is important to briefly mention such events to counter the colonial propaganda that the riots of the 1960s was due to anger brought on by overcrowdedness and summer heat. Black August asserts that in order for New Africans to arise to the historical task of defending the Nation, it is imperative that New Africans have a historical perspective of themselves resisting colonial oppression.

Black August avers that at a time when the Black Nation is experiencing the destruction of its community through planned gentrification, at a time when the quality of New African life is being blunted through unemployment, prison, drugs, high infant mortality and poverty, the call of New African organization should be one of resistance.

## Tenets of the Black August Program

1. A fast which historically has been used as an expression of personal commitment and resistance. Hence, from the sunrise until evening meal we will abstain from eating.
2. We abstain from consuming any type of intoxicants for the entire month of August. The necessity for this should be self-evident for all serious participants of Black August.
3. We limit our selection of television and radio to educational programs, i.e. news, documentaries and cultural programs, etc.
4. During BA we emphasize political and cultural studies for individuals involved in BA. Participants in BA should pair off with someone else you know to study and share knowledge of African Affairs.
5. As an outward expression of BA we wear a Black arm band on the left arm or wrist as a tribute to those Africans who have died as a result of their sacrifice for African Liberation. The arm band can be worn either on the inside or outside of your clothing.
6. Black August (BA) is a revolutionary concept. Therefore, all revolutionaries, nationalists and others who are committed to ending oppression should actively participate in Black August. Such participation not only begins to build the bridges of international solidarity, but it is through such solidarity that we strengthen ourselves to struggle for victory.



lina Railroad through the Blue Ridge was accomplished by convict labor. Georgia convicts were leased to lumber camps and brick yards. Alabama employed hets in railroad building, in mines and saw mills. Mississippi convicts were leased to railway contractors and planters. Until 1883, the leases of Texas convicts employed a portion of them in a cotton mill and at other times within the walls of the penitentiary and placed the remainder in railway construction camps. Arkansas convicts were let to plantation owners and coal miners. In Florida, the majority of the convicts were leased to turpentine farms — a smaller number were employed in phosphate mines.

The African prisoners continued to struggle behind the walls of these segregated convict lease system, county workhouses, chain gangs camps, and state and federal prisons, yet prison conditions for them remained much the same through World War 2. Inside conditions accurately reflected conditions in the larger society outside the walls, except by then the state's electric chair had mostly supplanted the lynch mob's rope.

## POST WORLD WAR 2 TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

Things began to change in the wake of World War 2. Four factors flowing together ushered in these changes. They were the ghetto population explosion, the drug influx, the emergence of independent African nations, and the Civil Rights Movement.

### The Ghetto Population Explosion

Plentiful jobs during the war, coupled with a severe shortage of White workers, cause U.S. war industries to hire New Africans in droves. Southern New Africans poured north to fill these unheard of job opportunities, and the already crowded ghetto populations mushroomed.

### Drug Influx

New African soldiers fought during the war to preserve European democracies. They returned home eager to join the fight to make segregated America democratic too. But the U.S. had witnessed Marcus Garvey organize similar sentiments following World War 1 into one of the greatest Black movements in the western hemisphere. This time the U.S. was more prepared to contain the new and expected New African assertiveness. Their weapon was "King Heroin." The U.S. employed the services of the Mafia during World War 2 to gather intelligence in Italy to defeat Fascist Mussolini.

Before World War 2, Mussolini embarked on a major campaign against the Mafia which enraged the group's leaders. Fascism was a big Mafia so it couldn't afford another Mafia to exist. Mussolini's activities turned Mafiosi into vigorous anti-Fascists, and the American Government cooperated

with the Mafia both in the United States and in Sicily. In the eyes of many Sicilians, the United States helped restore the Mafia's lost power. The Americans had to win the war, so they couldn't pay much attention to these things. "They thought the Mafia could help them, and perhaps they did" said Leonard Sciascia, perhaps the best known living Sicilian novelist and student of the Mafia.

During World War 2, the Office of Strategic Service (OSS), the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), helped to commute Lucky Luciano's sentence in federal prison and arrange for his repatriation to Sicily. Luciano was among the top dons in the mafia syndicate and the leading organizer of prostitution and drug trafficking. The OSS knew that Luciano had excellent ties to the Sicilian mafia and wanted the support of that organization for the Allied landing in Sicily in 1943. When Luciano left the U.S., numerous politicians and mafia dons were together at the Brooklyn docks to wave him goodbye in what was the first of many occasions that international drug dealers were recruited by the U.S. government to advance its foreign policy interests.

After the war, in return for "services rendered," the U.S. looked the other way as the Mafia flooded the major U.S. ghettos with heroin. Within six years after World War 2, due to the Mafia's marketing strategy, over 100,000 people were addicts, many of them Black.

### The Emergence of Independent African Nations

Africans from Afrika, having fought to save European Independence, returned to the African continent and began fighting for the Independence of their own colonized nations. Rather than fight losing African colonial wars, most European nations opted to grant "phased" independence to their African colonies. The U.S. now faced the prospect of thousands of African diplomatic personnel, their staff, and families, coming to the U.N. and wandering into a minefield of racial incidents, particularly on state visits to the rigidly segregated D.C. capital. That alone could push each newly emerging independent African nation into the socialist column. To counteract this possibility, the U.S. decided to desegregate. As a result, on May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court declared school segregation illegal.

In its landmark Brown Vs. Board of Education case, which heralded the beginning of the end of official segregation in the United States, the Supreme Court had been made fully aware of the relations between America's domestic policies and her foreign policy interest by the federal government's amicus curiae (i.e., friend of the court) brief, which read:

"It is in the context of the present world Struggle between freedom and tyranny that the problem of racial discrimination must be viewed... (for) discrimination against Minority groups in the United States has an

Adverse effect upon our relations with Other countries. Racial discrimination Furnishes grist for the communist propaganda mills, and it raises Doubts even among Friendly nations as to the Intensity of our devotion To the democratic faith."

Malcolm X provides similar insight into the reasoning behind the U.S. decisions to desegregate. During his February 16, 1965, speech at Rochester, New York's Corn Mill Methodist Church, he said:

From 1954 to 1964 can be easily looked upon as the era of the emerging African state. And as the African state emerged... What effect did it have on the Black American? When he saw the Black man on the [African] continent taking a stand, it made him become filled with the desire to also take a stand... Just as [the U.S.] had to change their approach with our people on this continent. As they used tokenism... on the African continent... they began to do the same thing with us here in the States... Tokenism... every move they made was a token move... They came up with a Supreme Court desegregation decision that they haven't put into practice yet. Not even in Rochester, much less in Mississippi. [Applause.]

### Origin of the Civil Rights Movement

On December 1, 1955, Ms. Rosa Parks defined Montgomery, Alabama's bus segregation laws by refusing to give her seat to a White man. Her subsequent arrest and the ensuing mass bus boycott by the Montgomery New African community kicked off the Civil Rights Movement. Martin Luther King, Jr., a young college-educated Baptist minister, was chosen to coordinate and lead his boycott primarily because he was a new arrival in town, intelligent, respected, and had not accumulated a list of grudge enemies as had the old guard. His selection for leadership catapulted him upon the stage of history. The 381 day boycott toppled Montgomery's bus segregation codes.

Revered Joseph E. Lowery was part of a group of young activist ministers who had begun to test segregated public transportation laws in addition to Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Abernathy in Montgomery, Alabama; Fred Shuttlesworth in Birmingham, Al-

abama; Theodore ("T.J.") Jemison in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and Charles K. Steel in Tallahassee, Florida. "The earliest boycotts were in Baton Rouge and Tallahassee, but they were unsuccessful," says Lowery. "We used to meet monthly in Montgomery to share our pain..." After the success of the Montgomery but boycott, the ministers met in New Orleans in February 1957 and formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) with Martin Luther later nominated as chairman of the board. Months later, in 1957, Ghana became the first of a string of sub-Saharan African nations to be granted independence. As northern discrimination, bulging ghettos, and the drug influx were setting off a rise in New African numbers behind the walls, Southern segregation, the emergence of Independent African nations, and the resulting Civil Rights Movement provided those increasing numbers with the general political agenda; equality and anti-discrimination.

## CIVIL RIGHTS THROUGH THE BLACK POWER ERA

### Religious Struggles in Prison

Meanwhile, behind the walls, smart segments of New Africans began rejecting Western Christianity; they turned to Islam as preached by Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam (NOI) and Noble Drew Ali's Muslim Science Temple of America (MST). The NOI preached that Islam was the true religion of Black people, that Blacks were the original people on earth, and that Blacks in America were a nation needing land and independence. The MST preached that the Asiatic Black people in America must proclaim their

